United Nations A/55/78–E/2000/56

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
25 May 2000

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session
Item 97 (a) of the preliminary list*
Environment and sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2000
5 July-1 August 2000
Item 13 (a) of the provisional agenda**
Economic and environmental questions: sustainable development

Measures taken in the United Nations system to accelerate progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/55/50.
** E/2000/100.

00-44846 (E) 130600

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, at its fifty-fourth session, adopted resolution 54/218 of 22 December 1999, entitled "Implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly". In that resolution the Assembly, *inter alia*, emphasized the importance of the continued active and collaborative involvement of all relevant bodies of the United Nations system in the implementation of Agenda 21[1] and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21.[2] The Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in close collaboration with all relevant bodies of the United Nations system, and taking into account the outcome of the deliberations of the Commission on Sustainable Development, to submit to the Assembly for consideration at its fifty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council, an analytical report on the measures taken within the United Nations system to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, including the identification of constraints and recommendations on how to address those constraints.

2. At its fifteenth meeting, held in New York on 24 and 25 January 2000, the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) considered, among other items, preparation of the above-mentioned report. The Committee agreed that the report would follow the structure of the previous report[3] prepared for the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly to ensure continuity of information, that it would focus on matters of strategic importance related to collaboration within the United Nations system in the field of sustainable development and would identify the main challenges and constraints in that area. Furthermore, the report would highlight the main conclusions reached by IACSD and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) that needed to be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The Committee also decided that the report would provide a brief update of actions required in follow-up to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and other intergovernmental bodies.

II. Work under way in the United Nations system to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

Recent developments in the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development

3. Since the submission of the previous report in June 1999, IACSD has met twice to continue its work in promoting cooperation and joint action within the United Nations system and to ensure coordinated responses to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and other relevant intergovernmental bodies and processes.[4] The Committee held its fourteenth meeting in Vienna on 9 and 10 September 1999 and its fifteenth meeting in New York on 24 and 25 January 2000.

4. During the meetings, IACSD considered standing items on follow-up to the outcome of ACC meetings, including the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa,[5] as well as the ACC statement on the impact of climate change and depletion of renewable resources affecting small island developing States.

5. IACSD also reviewed matters related to the outcome of the deliberations at the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and considered the follow-up to the seventh session as well as preparations for the eighth and ninth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Committee welcomed the establishment by the General Assembly of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction as the successor arrangement to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. It took note of the establishment of an Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction under the auspices of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and requested members serving on the Task Force to report to the Committee on issues of relevance to the work of IACSD.

6. At its fourteenth and fifteenth meetings, IACSD further discussed the establishment of an Environmental Management Group, as proposed by the

Secretary-General in his report to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly on environment and human settlements.[6] IACSD expressed strong interest in working with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in designing specific modalities for the Group. It underscored the need for the United Nations system to share a common view with respect to the mandate, terms of reference, membership and working methods of the Group. During its fifteenth meeting, the Committee considered the draft terms of reference of the Environmental Management Group prepared by UNEP as a result of the consultative process and endorsed it with some amendments.

7. At both meetings IACSD also considered the results of the joint IACSD/Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions/Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality working meeting on the task manager approach. The Committee supported the general thrust of the recommendations of the joint meeting and reiterated its view that other standing committees of ACC might also benefit from the task manager approach. The Committee agreed that the main objectives of the expansion of the task manager approach were:

(a) To avoid multiple inter-agency mechanisms at the global level for policy coordination in any given thematic area;

(b) To facilitate coordinated implementation of the outcomes of major world conferences and summits and their respective periodic reviews, taking into account the evolving political context;

(c) To promote better coordination and complementarity between policy development and normative functions of the United Nations system at the global level with activities of United Nations organizations carried out individually and/or jointly at the regional and national levels.

8. At its fifteenth meeting, the Committee was informed that, while the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions supported the proposals of IACSD, in view of the nature of its work, in particular its focus on more operational issues, the Consultative Committee would continue to rely mainly on ad hoc arrangements in carrying out its work. It was agreed that IACSD might return to this issue when the results of the review of the functioning of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its subsidiary machinery become available.

9. In considering matters related to the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly, IACSD reviewed inter-agency arrangements in support of the future implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Among other decisions, the Committee reaffirmed the list of task managers for the future implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Also under this item, the Committee agreed on arrangements for the preparation of the reports of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

10. Regarding preparations for the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, IACSD stressed the need for active involvement of the United Nations system to ensure high-quality preparations for this event and its successful outcome. While final decisions on the preparatory process will be taken by Governments at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the Committee emphasized the importance of early and timely contributions from the United Nations system. The Committee agreed that a proactive approach could include the following early actions:

(a) Expediting the preparation of the second critical trends report and related modelling work so as to make public at an early stage their findings;

(b) Preparing the second ACC statement on sustainable development;

(c) Strengthening the United Nations system's outreach to the general public.

11. IACSD further stressed the need for clearly establishing the goals of the 2002 review. The Committee felt that, while Agenda 21 remains a vital and most comprehensive international programme in the field of sustainable development, the 2002 review should not be limited to the state of the implementation of its specific provisions. Preparations for the review should critically assess the impact of new developments and emerging challenges and the ways of addressing them. These could include globalization, information technology, governance and the growing magnitude of natural disasters.

12. The Committee agreed that a number of ongoing processes could contribute to the 2002 review. These include the outcome of the Intergovernmental Forum

on Forests; the outcome of the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on the issue of energy; the preparation by UNEP of the third Global Environmental Outlook; the third assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; and the outcome of the high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development.

13. The Committee also agreed that the governing bodies of the United Nations agencies with major mandates and programmes in the field of sustainable development should be involved in the preparations for the 2002 review. The Committee stressed that non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and other major groups should actively participate in the 2002 review process.

Recent developments in the Subcommittee on Water Resources of the Administrative Committee on Coordination

14. The ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources held its twentieth session in Geneva from 4 to 8 October 1999. At that session the Subcommittee reviewed its method of work and agreed that its current procedures called for substantial improvement. The Subcommittee discussed the fresh direction and focus of its future activities and reached agreement on a new approach to the organization and conduct of its meetings. It requested the independent consultant whose service had been obtained in respect of this matter to take account of the Subcommittee's decisions in finalizing the consultant's report on the method of the work of the Subcommittee, which would be used as an input into a report of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. In a one-day special session held in The Hague on 23 March 2000, immediately after the second World Water Forum and Ministerial Conference, the Subcommittee discussed the findings of the consultant's report and agreed on the final outline and contents of the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General.

15. At its twentieth meeting the Subcommittee also reviewed its work on the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in providing safe water and sanitation for all during the 1990s. The report will be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-fifth session through the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Economic and Social Council. Following a review of detailed proposals made by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development and adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1999/47 of 28 July 1999, the Subcommittee agreed that the report should follow the proposed outline and content while ensuring a balanced approach.

16. The Subcommittee continued its discussion on the preparation of the biennial *World Water Development Report*, which is expected for publication in 2002 as part of the newly established World Water Assessment Programme, to be developed in line with the recommendation by the World Water Forum in The Hague. It explored various alternatives of collaboration with non-United Nations bodies and assessed options for setting up an independent unit to produce the report on its behalf. The Subcommittee endorsed the proposal for the report's two-part structure, with one part focusing on a specific theme and the other an overview of trends and analysis. The Subcommittee recommended that the theme of the first edition in 2002 should be "Progress in Implementation of chapter 18 of Agenda 21", to coincide with the 10-year review of Agenda 21 in the same year. At an expert group meeting held in New York in January 2000, members of the Subcommittee and experts further discussed the data requirements, format and methodological issues of the report. At the one-day special meeting held in The Hague, the Subcommittee further reviewed the institutional arrangements for the production of the report and agreed that an independent unit would be set up and housed in the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) beginning in June 2000.

17. In considering other matters, the Subcommittee evaluated the observance of the 1999 World Day for Water. The Subcommittee acknowledged the need for system-wide efforts in this regard and agreed that it should be responsible for providing the necessary support to governments for the observance of the World Day for Water. The Subcommittee confirmed that UNESCO will be the lead agency for organizing activities in celebration of the 2000 World Day for Water, the theme of which will be "Water for the twenty-first century". It was further agreed that the theme for the following two years would be "Water and health" (2001) and "Water for development" (2002).

Recent developments in the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas of the Administrative Committee on Coordination

18. Follow-up to decision 7/1 on oceans and seas, adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventh session, has been a key item in the work of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, which met informally in August 1999 and formally at its eighth session from 19 to 21 January 2000. At both meetings, the Subcommittee discussed at length the implementation of decision 7/1 and reviewed its continuing collaboration with the Commission. On the issue of its improved transparency, effectiveness and responsiveness to member States, the Subcommittee recommended a number of concrete measures for implementation, which were subsequently endorsed by IACSD at its fourteenth meeting. These included:

(a) Regular annual briefings by members of the Subcommittee to delegations and interested observers during every session of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

(b) Briefings on the work of the Subcommittee to Governments and agency representatives during regular sessions of the respective governing bodies;

(c) Development of the Subcommittee's own web site, linked to those of ACC and the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans;

(d) Producing a brochure to be made available at the briefings.

19. In its discussion on the new informal consultative process on ocean affairs launched by the General Assembly in resolution 54/33 of 24 November 1999, the Subcommittee acknowledged the concerns of the General Assembly over the need for increased coordination and cooperation on ocean issues. It also noted that coordinated action depends on the due process of endorsement and financing by each member agency's governing structure. In this connection, the Subcommittee agreed that it would report to IACSD and the ocean consultative process on the following major initiatives and activities:

(a) Active contributions to the system-wide reporting to various intergovernmental bodies;

(b) Joint production of the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans;

(c) Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities;

(d) Assisting in implementation of the Global International Water Assessment;

(e) Improving the functioning and effectiveness of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection;

(f) Ensuring coordinated inputs on oceans and coastal areas for the 10-year review of Agenda 21.

20. The Subcommittee also considered the status of the implementation of the Global Programme of Action. A number of activities were highlighted in the discussions. These include:

(a) The launching of the Global Programme of Action central clearing house node and the development of the pollutant source category nodes by partner agencies;

(b) Agreement on the roles and responsibilities of the Subcommittees on Water Resources and on Oceans and Coastal Areas in the implementation of the Programme of Action;

(c) The formulation of a sewerage action plan and the assessment of the feasibility to hold a global conference on sewerage in 2001;

(d) Preparations for the first intergovernmental review meeting on the Programme of Action in 2001, including the development of a framework for reporting and sharing of experiences by partners in the implementation of the Programme.

Recent developments in other inter-agency processes

Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Energy

21. At its twelfth meeting held in September 1998, IACSD established an ad hoc inter-agency task force on energy with a view to ensuring contributions of all relevant organizations of the United Nations system to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development on energy and transport. The task force held its first meeting in April 1999, in conjunction with the first session of the Committee on Energy and

Natural Resources for Development. At that meeting the task force agreed on the scope and approach of its work and on the establishment of an electronic network to facilitate information sharing and coordination.

22. The task force met for its second meeting in Vienna on 8 September 1999 to continue its preparations for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The task force considered the issues and reporting requirements emanating from the first session of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development and discussed the issue of financing for energy development. It also reviewed the draft reports prepared for the first Ad Hoc Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development and made arrangements for the preparation of reports for the second session of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development scheduled for August 2000. In addition, the task force continued its discussion on ways and means to best coordinate the matrix of United Nations system activities in the field of energy and on the elaboration of a common system-wide approach to energy and sustainable development.

23. The third meeting of the task force took place on 13 March 2000 in New York. At that meeting the task force reviewed the outcome of the first session of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development and agreed on the general considerations that need to be taken into account in preparing for the Group's second session. In this regard, the task force noted the request of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts to prepare case studies on specific issues discussed during the Group's first session. The task force agreed that the case studies should cover all key issues, while focusing on successful policies, and should present examples from all regions. During the meeting the task force also addressed the request of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts for the matrix of United Nations system activities in the field of energy, which had been prepared to facilitate coordination of activities and enhance cooperation among United Nations entities/agencies preparing for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. It was decided to review and update the matrix before making it public on the web site of the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The task force also reviewed the arrangements for documentation, including the preparations for the second session of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development, scheduled for August 2000.

Inter-agency work in support of the implementation of the outcome of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and in support of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests of the Commission on Sustainable Development

24. The informal, high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF) has continued its cooperation in support of the implementation of the outcome of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) of the Commission on Sustainable Development and in support of the Commission's Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). The Task Force focused its recent work on the preparation of the fourth session of IFF, which was held in New York from 31 January to 11 February 2000. In addition, the Task Force undertook a number of activities to assist nine government-led initiatives in support of the implementation of the IFF programme of work. In August 1999, ITFF launched a Directory of forest-related international and regional institutions and instruments on the web site of the IFF secretariat. The Task Force also met with representatives of major groups during the third and fourth sessions of IFF to explore the possibilities of their increased participation in future activities of the Task Force. The members of the Task Force welcomed suggestions from major groups to ensure transparency and involvement in the implementation of IPF/IFF's proposals for action. The final report of IFF recognizes the Task Force as a consolidated partnership mechanism to further advance inter-agency cooperation in supporting sustainable forest management and the full implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. It also invites the executive heads of relevant organizations of the United Nations system and heads of relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments to form a collaborative partnership on forests, which could build on the work of the Task Force, for promoting coordinated and cooperative action, including joint programming submissions of coordinated proposals to their respective governing bodies. The Task Force is scheduled to meet in the near future to further explore the possibilities of increased

cooperation at the national level, especially as regards national forest programmes.

III. United Nations system response to the outcomes of the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

Sustainable tourism

25. At its fourteenth and fifteenth meetings, IACSD considered follow-up activities to decision 7/3 on tourism and sustainable development adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventh session. At both meetings IACSD was briefed by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) on its ongoing and planned activities, including those undertaken in collaboration with organizations of the United Nations system and major groups in implementing the international work programme on sustainable tourism development contained in decision 7/3. In this regard, IACSD welcomed the work by WTO on organizing and convening the first meeting of the ad hoc informal open-ended working group on tourism.

26. At its fifteenth meeting, IACSD heard an oral report by the representative of WTO on the result of the first meeting of the ad hoc informal open-ended working group on tourism, which was held in Costa Rica, on 20 and 21 January 2000. The working group first addressed procedural issues, including its composition, methods of work and funding. Participants then discussed the role of the working group and reached agreement on the priorities of its programme of activities. Among the priorities identified were capacity-building, development and application of indicators for sustainable tourism, preparations for the International Year of Ecotourism (2002) and assessment of the net income that accrues to the local economy from tourism. Lead and assisting agencies were assigned to each of the priority areas. IACSD stressed the importance of further supporting and strengthening the working group, the first multi-stakeholder working group with participation of both Governments and major group representatives, so as to ensure continuity in the implementation of the international work programme on sustainable tourism development.

Changing production and consumption patterns

27. At its seventh session, the Commission on Sustainable Development reaffirmed the international work programme on sustainable consumption and production patterns adopted at its third session in 1995. The Commission further identified four priority areas to be incorporated into the work programme. These are (a) effective policy development and implementation; (b) natural resource management and cleaner production; (c) globalization and its impacts on consumption and production patterns; and (d) urbanization and its impacts on consumption and production patterns.

28. As task manager for the work on changing consumption patterns, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs undertook a number of activities to further the implementation of the international work programme. In the area of effective policy development and implementation, the Department continued its work on the extension of the existing United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection to include sustainable consumption. The revised text of the United Nations Guidelines, adopted by the Commission at its seventh session, was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in July 1999 and approved by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

29. In the area of natural resource management and cleaner production, the Department, in collaboration with UNEP, organized an expert group meeting in Washington, D.C., in August 1999 to examine the design and implementation of government policies to promote the adoption of environmental managerial accounting by enterprises. Experience has shown that environmental managerial accounting helps management to identify and measure the full spectrum of environmental costs of production and the economic benefits of pollution prevention and cleaner production. Environmental managerial accounting offers a tool to integrate those costs and benefits in day-to-day business decision-making.

30. UNEP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) continue their promotion of cleaner production through national cleaner production centres. An important initiative in this area has been the promotion of investments in cleaner production. Pilot activities have taken place in several developing countries, with support from the

Government of Norway. Within the same framework, UNEP organized an expert group meeting on financial engineering instruments to promote investments in cleaner production (Kaunas, Lithuania, 18-20 October 1999). UNEP is also planning to hold its sixth international high-level seminar on cleaner production, as well as an international pollution prevention summit, in Montreal, Canada, in October 2000. In this connection, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in cooperation with UNEP and UNIDO, organized a regional expert meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean to develop guidelines for the design and implementation of national cleaner technology strategies (Bogotá, October 1999).

Oceans and seas

31. The Commission on Sustainable Development, in its decision 7/1 on oceans and seas, set out the major challenges at the national, regional and global levels and identified areas of particular concern. The Commission recommended specific action for addressing these challenges and concerns and, among other initiatives, recommended that the General Assembly establish, under its aegis, an open-ended informal consultative process on oceans and seas.

32. Acting upon the results of the review by the Commission, the General Assembly, at its fifty-fourth session, adopted resolution 54/33, in which the Assembly decided to establish an open-ended informal consultative process in order to facilitate its annual review of developments in ocean affairs. By the same resolution the General Assembly also decided on the organization of meetings within the framework of the consultative process.

33. The open-ended informal consultative process on oceans and seas is scheduled to take place in New York from 30 May to 2 June 2000. The meetings will be coordinated by two co-chairpersons appointed by the President of the General Assembly in consultation with Member States, taking into account the need for representation from developed and developing countries. The consultative process will review developments in ocean affairs, identify particular issues to be considered by the General Assembly and emphasize areas where coordination and cooperation at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels should be enhanced.

34. The specific follow-up to decision 7/1 has also been a key concern of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, which has met twice since the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development to consider, *inter alia*, the implementation of decision 7/1. A summary of the work of the Subcommittee is contained in paragraphs 18 to 20 of the present report.

IV. Follow-up to the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

35. The General Assembly convened its twenty-second special session in New York on 27 and 28 September 1999 to review and appraise the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The General Assembly adopted a declaration in which Member States reaffirmed the principles of and their commitments to the sustainable development of small island developing States. The declaration calls on the international community to provide effective means, including financial and technical resources, to support the sustainable development efforts of small island developing States. The General Assembly also adopted a review document entitled "State of progress and initiatives for the future implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States". The document set forth recommendations for action in priority areas, as well as the means of implementation of these recommendations, to complement and reinforce current activities in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

36. Information on specific follow-up action to the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly, including action by regional commissions, is contained in a report of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration at its fifty-fifth session.

V. Outcome of the eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development that calls for action by the United Nations system

37. The Commission on Sustainable Development adopted a number of decisions at its eighth session, including decisions on agriculture, integrated planning and management of land resources, economic growth, trade and investment, financial resources and mechanisms and preparations for the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The forthcoming sixteenth meeting of IACSD, as well as meetings of other relevant inter-agency bodies, will review arrangements for specific follow-up actions to these outcomes. The main elements of the Commission's decisions that relate to the work of the United Nations system are outlined below.

Agriculture

38. The Commission urged the international community to fulfil the commitments for financial assistance for promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD). The Commission urged the international community, including the United Nations system and the international financial institutions, to provide support to institutional reform and development of market infrastructure and access for achieving SARD in developing countries. Governments and the international community, including the United Nations system, were further urged to assist developing countries in developing strategies and in implementing measures to attract and promote private capital flows and investment in sustainable agriculture and rural development.

39. The Commission urged Governments, relevant international organizations and the private sector to increase their contribution to capacity-building and the transfer of appropriate technology, in particular environmentally sound technology, to developing countries, as well as to promote partnerships for fostering sustainable agriculture and food security and rural development. International financial institutions were encouraged to further promote the transfer of technology and capacity-building, with emphasis on the allocation of funds to enable developing countries to achieve food security through enhanced agricultural production, including food storage systems and agro-food industries.

40. Relevant international, regional and national bodies and the private sector were further encouraged to support developing countries to increase research and achieve integrated natural resource management, appropriate technology and sustainable agricultural methods and to disseminate information on the results of their research and its applicability. In this regard, the Commission invited the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) to increase research and pursue partnerships in integrated natural resource management and to disseminate the results.

41. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa and the governing body of the Global Environment Facility were encouraged to promote the use of their relevant mechanisms to support SARD-related initiatives, in line with national programmes, that result, *inter alia*, in the conservation and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity.

42. The Commission urged the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other relevant international organizations, particularly the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to assist countries in developing concrete policies and actions for the implementation of Agenda 21 concerning sustainable production and farming methods aimed at achieving the goals of the World Food Summit and of SARD. In particular, FAO was encouraged to develop a cross-sectoral programme on organic agriculture as part of its contribution to SARD. IFAD was encouraged to strengthen its assistance to rural communities in developing countries in support of their efforts to achieve SARD, primarily as a means to eradicate rural poverty.

43. The Commission urged Governments and relevant international organizations to further develop innovative institutional mechanisms to ensure effective stakeholder participation in decision-making related to SARD. As part of the ongoing review of progress towards SARD, and within existing structures and resources, FAO and the secretariat of the Commission

on Sustainable Development, in consultation with Governments, relevant international organizations and all major groups, were invited to continue the stakeholder dialogue on SARD, including facilitating the adequate and meaningful participation of stakeholders from developing countries. In preparing for the tenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, this dialogue should emphasize the identification of specific examples and the development of case studies that illustrate or support the principles of sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Integrated planning and management of land resources

44. The Commission urged Governments and the international community to fulfil the financial commitments to effectively support the implementation of integrated planning and management of land resources in developing countries, taking into account priorities identified by those countries. The Commission encouraged the international community and United Nations agencies and organizations to provide technical and financial support to the efforts of Governments to minimize socio-economic obstacles related to access to land and security of tenure.

45. The Commission also urged the United Nations system to support Governments in further promoting the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (Istanbul, June 1996) and in linking it to the implementation of Agenda 21, including local Agenda 21 programmes. Support for the five-year review of Habitat II was encouraged.

46. The Commission further urged Governments, in particular those of developed countries, and international organizations to provide technological assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to implement the integrated planning and management of land resources. The United Nations and other international development organizations were urged to assist developing countries in their efforts to achieve integrated planning and management of land resources, through financial support, transfer of environmentally sound technologies on mutually agreed terms, capacity-building and education and training.

Economic growth, trade and investment

47. The Commission urged Governments, particularly in developed countries and, as appropriate, international organizations to improve market access, provide technical assistance and establish capacity-building initiatives in favour of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to help them to increase export opportunities, promote diversified export-oriented production and enhance their ability to trade, and to implement their commitments in existing multilateral agreements, including WTO agreements. The Commission encouraged Governments and international organizations to continue studies and work on impacts of trade liberalization on developing economies.

48. The Commission called on Governments to fully implement the Plan of Action adopted at the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and, in particular, to examine the use and effect, particularly on trade, of incentives to attract foreign direct investment with high technological content. UNCTAD should analyse all aspects of existing international agreements relevant to transfer of technology to be supported, as appropriate, by developed country funding.

49. The Commission urged Governments and international organizations to further consider the relationship between multilateral environmental agreements and WTO agreements, including the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity and trade-related intellectual property rights. The Commission considered it essential to improve dialogue and cooperation between trade, environment and other relevant policy makers at the national level, as well as among relevant international organizations, including secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements. UNEP and UNCTAD were urged to continue to study and examine economic and development implications of multilateral environmental agreements.

50. The Commission encouraged Governments and international organizations to address the potential risks that may arise from the volatility of short-term capital flows. The Commission recommended that Governments and international organizations, in cooperation with relevant private sector organizations and stakeholders, undertake relevant measures to

enhance the potential of investment, including foreign direct investment, to contribute to sustainable development. Governments and international organizations were encouraged to develop, as appropriate, mechanisms for the environmental assessment of export credit projects.

Financial resources and mechanisms

51. The Commission encouraged Governments to promote the use of innovative financial mechanisms, and called on them, in cooperation with international organizations and major groups, to continue to engage in study and research on ways to make such mechanisms more practical and effective.

52. The Commission called for the Global Environmental Facility to be strengthened and called for its mandate to be broadened.

53. The Commission called on the international organizations and Governments to initiate further innovative pilot projects and partnership arrangements that encourage the private sector and other major groups to finance sustainable development.

54. The Commission urged international organizations to improve coordination of their work in the area of finance for sustainable development in order to avoid duplication and to raise their effectiveness, focusing on their respective area of competence where they have a clear comparative advantage. In this regard, better cooperation and dialogue is needed between international organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNDP and the Global Environmental Facility.

Preparations for the ten-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

55. The Commission invited the United Nations Secretariat, in close cooperation with UNEP, the regional commissions and the secretariats of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development-related conventions, as well as other relevant organizations within and outside the United Nations system, including international and regional financial institutions, to support preparatory activities, in particular at the national and regional levels, in a coordinated and mutually reinforcing way.

56. The Commission invited the Governing Council of UNEP to promote the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the United Nations system and to provide its views to the Commission at its tenth session as an important input to the preparatory process on the environmental aspects of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the other outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

57. The Commission invited all relevant United Nations organizations and the secretariats of conventions related to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to review and assess their respective programmes of work since the Conference and to report to the Commission at its tenth session on progress made in the implementation of sustainable development-related objectives.

VI. Constraints faced by the United Nations system in the field of sustainable development and recommendations on how to address these constraints

58. In the report submitted last year to the General Assembly,[3] an analysis was made of the main constraints faced by organizations of the United Nations system in the implementation of Agenda 21. The report highlighted the negative impacts on programme delivery caused by lack of financial resources, inadequate institutional capacity, cumbersome reporting relationships and inconsistent decision-making by the governing bodies of United Nations agencies. While progress has been made in some areas through reform efforts, including in inter-agency coordination, those obstacles identified in the report continue to hinder programme implementation in many instances. The nominal zero growth approach that has been applied to the budgeting processes of United Nations organizations has made it increasingly difficult for them to undertake new initiatives in dealing with emerging challenges.

59. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the United Nations system has made significant progress in policy formulation and development. Through inter-agency collaboration and joint efforts with national research institutions and major groups, organizations of the United Nations system have helped advance the understanding and awareness of sustainable development principles and practices among all stakeholders worldwide. As a new paradigm for achieving social, economic and environmental well-being, sustainable development has been globally recognized as a viable path to an equitable, just and prosperous society, not only for the present generation, but also for the generations to come. Yet the fresh, innovative ideas that have developed, often on the basis of local experiences and successes, are not being disseminated and replicated on a larger scale because of resource constraints. Many sustainable development projects, painstakingly designed and formulated, have been shelved due to lack of funds.

60. In this regard, it is worth noting that little progress has been made so far in implementing some 300 projects that small island developing States submitted to the meeting of representatives of donors and small island developing States in February 1999. A large number of those projects had been designed and formulated with the technical assistance of organizations of the United Nations system. Those same institutions have been obliged to turn down repeated requests for implementing the submitted projects, as funds for them have not been forthcoming. While there has been some donor interest in supporting some of the projects, there has been little evidence of any concerted donor action. Assistance may be necessary to revise or reframe the project proposals so as to attract donor support. To this end the United Nations system should play a supportive role.

61. The governing structures of organizations in the United Nations system have not always facilitated inter-agency coordination. The task manager approach that has evolved successfully since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development has to operate on the basis of guidance by the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations system, which does not necessarily synchronize its deliberation and decision-making processes. Decisions reached via the inter-agency collaboration procedure at IACSD need to be reported back to the respective governing body of each member agency for authorization or approval. This tends to prolong the interval between agreement at IACSD and actual implementation of a decision.

62. The increase in mandates and programme activities that cut across sectors has also posed a challenge to inter-agency collaboration at the level of programme delivery. Sustainable development projects require an integrative approach to project design and execution. The need for collaboration is especially strong in the field of health, which was identified as a key area for action in the previous report, as well as in energy, freshwater and changing production and consumption patterns. The prevalent practice of formulating development projects largely within the context of each individual agency's mandate or area of expertise fails to maximize resource and project impacts.

63. Successful action to remove these constraints requires fundamental reforms. However, some measures are worth considering and could be adopted on a provisional basis. Closer coordination at the regional and country levels should be fostered among organizations of the United Nations system. As an initial measure, regional and country offices of programmes, funds and specialized agencies could improve communications and sharing of information on regional and country programmes in order to identify areas for collaboration and savings. Regional projects on climate change, biodiversity, desertification and pollution prevention offer great potentials for synergy. In due course such collaboration may lead to joint programming to further consolidate gains in resource efficiency through common project design and implementation.

64. In this connection, more strenuous efforts should be made to promote cooperation with regional commissions, regional development banks and regional economic and technical cooperation organizations, whose knowledge of the specific region should be fully tapped in project design and execution. Participation by major groups and the private sector in the design and implementation of development programmes at the country and field levels will contribute to development goals and objectives by bringing diverse perspectives on national and local needs and by acting as partners in the process. Such cooperative arrangements may also open up new possibilities for donor support.

65. Inter-agency coordination at the country level may also benefit from the Common Country Assessment within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework which provides an important entry point for initiating and conducting the coordination process. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework provides an essential planning framework for the development operations of the United Nations system at the country level. The common country assessment is the first step for the preparation of the Assistance Framework. It generates a common understanding of the causes of development problems as well as the needs and priorities of a country. Similarly, the World Bank's comprehensive development framework, which is in the pilot phase of implementation, promotes a long-term holistic approach to development, and opens up opportunities for cooperation and consultation among Governments, donors, civil society, the private sector and the United Nations system.

66. At the intergovernmental level, policy-making by governing bodies could benefit from enhanced communication, including through such approaches as joint sessions. The special high-level meetings of the Economic and Social Council with representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions have succeeded in breaking stereotypes and conventional mindsets and have opened up new horizons for development cooperation at the policy-making level. These initiatives are also applicable to other intergovernmental forums where improved exchange of information on resolutions and decisions and joint sessions on common tasks can pave the way for inter-agency coordination at the programme and project level.

Notes

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex.

[3] A/54/131-E/1999/75.

[4] For background information on the establishment of IACSD, see ibid.

[5] A/52/871-S/1998/318.

[6] A/53/463.

United Nations E/2000/57

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
23 May 2000

Original: English

Substantive session of 2000
New York, 5 July-1 August 2000
Items 4 (a) and 6 of the provisional agenda*

Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system related to the following theme: assessment of the progress made within the United Nations system, through the conference reviews, in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

Assessment of the progress made within the United Nations system, through the conference reviews, in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General

* E/2000/100.

00-44563 (E) 060700

Summary

The present report aims at assisting the Economic and Social Council, at the coordination segment of its substantive session of 2000, in carrying out an assessment of the progress made within the United Nations system, through the conference reviews, in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

Based on an examination of lessons learned from the five-year reviews of conferences conducted thus far, the report makes a number of proposals to assist the Economic and Social Council in its guidance to its subsidiary bodies with respect to the upcoming 10-year reviews of the conferences of the 1990s as well as in further enhancing its own work on conference follow-up. The report also discusses progress in implementing the conferences in a more integrated and coordinated fashion at national and international levels, and makes a number of suggestions for ensuring that the United Nations system provides enhanced support in this regard.

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Introduction

1. Since 1995, the Economic and Social Council has made it one of its major goals to promote an integrated and well-coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the major United Nations conferences of the 1990s. For a number of years, the Council has adopted a set of important decisions to draw together in a coherent manner the outcomes of the conferences and define the broad orientation and modalities for the United Nations system — and, in many cases, the international community at large — with respect to supporting in an integrated and coordinated fashion the achievement of common conference goals at global, regional and national levels.

2. The Economic and Social Council decided, at its substantive session of 1999, to take stock of this five-year effort, and to assess, at the coordination segment of its substantive session of 2000, the progress made within the United Nations system, through the conference reviews, in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields as a possible contribution to the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations (Council resolution 1999/55 and Council decision 1999/281).

3. The present report aims at supporting the review of the Economic and Social Council. The first section examines the five-year review processes held thus far[1] to draw lessons for improving the preparations of the upcoming reviews of conferences and follow-up to conferences in general. The second section highlights progress being made towards achieving a more integrated approach for implementing the outcomes of the conferences of the 1990s. The report has been prepared in close cooperation with United Nations system organizations.[2]

I. Improving the follow-up to conferences: lessons learned from the five-year reviews

4. In view of the Economic and Social Council's role in promoting a coordinated and integrated follow-up to conferences in support of the General Assembly's overall responsibility, the present section aims to assist the Council in guiding the preparations of the upcoming reviews of conferences and in improving the follow-up to conferences in general, based on experience gained in the five-year reviews conducted thus far. It takes a fairly broad approach by examining aspects that, although they do not fall under the direct supervision of the Council, are decided upon based on proposals of the Council's functional commissions and the Council itself.

A. Lessons learned from the five-year reviews

1. Modalities, scope and timing

5. The modalities and scope of the five-year reviews have varied considerably from one conference to another. For the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), the General Assembly undertook an overall review of progress in the implementation of their respective outcomes, at special sessions.[3] The Secretary-General reported to the Assembly at its fifty-first session on progress made towards achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children, based on a mid-decade review. For the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, the five-year review was conducted by the Commission on Human Rights, the Economic and Social Council, and the Assembly. For the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All, a mid-decade conference was held in Amman in 1996, and the 10-year review recently took place at the World Education Forum in Dakar.

6. The first issue that arises from the reviews of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the International Conference on Population and Development as well as from the ongoing reviews of the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women is that of their wide-ranging coverage. These reviews addressed virtually all aspects of the conference outcomes, ranging from the international enabling environment and other cross-cutting issues, to more specific sectoral aspects and emerging new challenges. Time was lacking both in the functional

commissions and in the preparatory committees to negotiate the draft outcomes. The fact that there was also a temptation in some reviews to reopen a number of issues agreed at the conferences, despite the commitment not to do so, put additional strains on the negotiations. At the same time, in a number of areas, the five-year span proved too short for the reviews to be based on an adequate assessment of whether policies for implementing conferences had been having an impact.

7. Still, the reviews identified some developments that needed to be addressed such as, in the case of the International Conference on Population and Development, problems of resources, the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) epidemic, and the need to deal with the causes of international and internal migration and urbanization and the resultant dislocations; and in the case of the five-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, international consensus was furthered on issues such as energy, transport and tourism which had not been directly addressed in Agenda 21.[4] The review of the World Summit for Social Development has recognized the need for collective action to offset globalization's negative social and economic consequences. The increasing inequality within and between countries, the importance of rehabilitating the public sector, and the impact of conflicts and crises on social development also emerged as new challenges.

8. For the World Summit for Children, on the other hand, the mid-term review was based on a more technical assessment of progress in achieving the goals of the Summit. This review was unlike the other reviews, in that the General Assembly adopted a short resolution (Assembly resolution 51/186 of 16 December 1996) reaffirming the Summit's commitments and calling for further efforts in areas where goals were not being met.[5]

9. It should be mentioned that quite a large portion of the regular budget and extrabudgetary funds are spent on the review processes, instead of on actual implementation process at the country level.

Recommendations

10. With regard to future reviews of conferences, the Economic and Social Council could invite its functional commissions to, at an early stage, (a) clearly identify the goals and scope of the review; and (b) ensure that the reviews' preparations focus on the core issues and critically address the impact of new developments and new challenges. A key concern should be the need to live up to the commitments made. The reviews should identify (a) lessons learned from the implementation of conference outcomes; (b) constraints encountered and ways to overcome the constraints; and (c) new and emerging areas that were not included in the conference outcome and need to be addressed.

2. Overlapping consideration of cross-cutting issues and conference goals

11. The five-year reviews have naturally addressed common themes and overarching conference goals, such as the enabling national and international environments for development (including financing, trade, technology and external debt), basic social services for all, poverty and employment, human rights and participation, and gender equality. The Economic and Social Council identified many of these common themes in 1995.[6] New challenges related to globalization and, in particular, trade and information technology, armed conflicts and the threats posed by HIV/AIDS have also been discussed in every review. However, the five-year reviews have not always built on each other in this respect. Their outcomes often repeat one another, and in some cases there are contradictions in approaches. In particular, some issues, albeit cross-cutting, have been lead themes of a particular conference, such as gender and poverty eradication, and thus it would be appropriate for all conference reviews to reflect the outcomes of those lead conferences, for example, the Beijing and Copenhagen conferences, or of their five-year reviews. This has not always been possible owing to timing but also owing to other factors. Cross-cutting issues such as the international enabling environment raise even more complex issues. In such cases, guidance should come from the conference that approached the issue from the widest perspective, as did the World Summit for Social Development, or from relevant deliberations in the central intergovernmental bodies such as the Council. This again has not always been the case.

12. In effect, the guidance developed by the Economic and Social Council since 1995 on many of the cross-cutting conference themes has not always fed into the reviews. For instance, the Council's

recommendations to ensure greater coherence between the development objectives agreed upon by the international community and the functioning of the international trading and financial system are not reflected with the same clarity in some of the conference reviews, as could have been the case.[7] Neither has gender been consistently mainstreamed in the five-year reviews thus far, although the Council's 1997 guidance on this topic provided principles and steps for doing so (agreed conclusions 1997/2)[8]. Section B provides recommendations for addressing these problems at intergovernmental level.

3. Rooting the reviews in national and regional experience and technical assessments

13. One lesson learned from the five-year reviews of the International Conference on Population and Development and of the World Summit for Social Development is that technical meetings and forums on specific issues can be very useful to enable dialogue and a more in-depth reflection on some programmes or policy aspects. At the same time, it is important to ensure that the outcomes of these meetings help to advance the consensus at the conference reviews themselves. Ways should be examined to ensure that the results of such expert meetings are brought into and fully used in the intergovernmental negotiating process.

14. National reporting on conference implementation is important to help countries assess and stimulate progress in implementing conference outcomes, as well as to allow exchange of experiences at regional and international levels. There are important differences in the level of national responses to each review process. Overall, while the main trends emerging from national reports and questionnaires were presented to the preparatory committees, some more specific developments that might have influenced the outcome of the five-year reviews were lost in the process of aggregation and analysis (see annex I, last column). National reports could be used more extensively in future conference reviews, together with additional studies and analysis. Overall, assessments of progress made in implementing conference outcomes need to be based on solid statistical data. It is also important that national reporting requested on each conference be clearly focused on a few main core issues. Important progress has been made within the system, particularly with respect to sustainable development as well as other areas,[9] as regards sharing information obtained through national reports and thereby limiting information requested from Governments. Yet, the Economic and Social Council's request to prepare a simplified format to be used by Governments in preparing information on a single subject or cluster of subjects is still valid.[10] Furthermore, national reports should help the countries in identifying where they need to strengthen their actions and where assistance would be required to build their capacity. In a number of countries, United Nations country teams supported the Governments in preparing an analysis of where the country stands in its follow-up to conferences, and of the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for reviewing progress. Mechanisms should be found to ensure that national reports are fully used in determining programmes by the United Nations system in the countries.

15. Besides national reporting, several regional meetings were held by the regional commissions in preparation for the five-year reviews. The regional meetings were important milestones for the five-year review of the outcome of the Beijing conference, for instance, and produced relevant outcomes documents. In some cases, the commissions conducted in-depth analysis, based on the reports and analysis of Governments, and on common trends, priorities and strategies. Yet, there is scope for better reflecting regional and subregional dimensions in the reviews' final outcomes.[11] The question could be considered how the outcome of these meetings could be better integrated and if a review at the regional level could be a possible approach in a short-term review process of five years.

Recommendations

16. The Economic and Social Council could encourage the United Nations and organizations of the United Nations system as well as its functional commissions to organize technical meetings and expert groups on specific subjects in the context of the reviews of conferences. Such meetings should help to deepen the understanding of core issues of conferences and to build consensus for the reviews.

17. The Economic and Social Council could underscore that regional and national preparations of the 10-year reviews are critical and their outcomes should be fully used in the reviews.

18. The Economic and Social Council could invite the United Nations system, through the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), to make further efforts to focus national reporting on each conference on a few main core issues. It could also encourage the United Nations system to pursue its efforts to share information obtained through national reports, thereby limiting information requested from Governments. The United Nations could be encouraged to develop a single web site on national reporting, divided by main themes.

19. The Economic and Social Council could recommend that national reports on conference follow-up be used in determining programmes by the United Nations system in countries, particularly in the framework of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the common country assessment (CCA).

4. Involving United Nations system organizations more extensively in the conference reviews

20. The involvement of the organizations of the system in the five-year reviews of conferences has varied, as has the extent of their collaboration. It appears to have been the most extensive for the review of Agenda 21 and of the World Summit for Social Development. For the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, several organizations provided reports on progress made with regard to various chapters of Agenda 21 within the context of the task manager system. The Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world" has been particularly proactive in mobilizing contributions and proposals of organizations of the United Nations system and the specialized agencies. The Committee made a series of pointed requests to obtain reports of organizations on well-identified areas.

21. Overall, however, there would seem to be scope for further deepening the involvement of the specialized agencies and the system at large in the reviews of conferences. In this regard, the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) at its fifteenth meeting (January 2000) suggested, in particular, that the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) should be involved in the review early on, by assessing progress in gearing the system towards overarching conference goals. It would also be important to involve intergovernmental bodies of United Nations agencies that have other mandates and programmes in the field addressed by the conferences.[12]

22. Also, to improve coordinated implementation and reporting within the United Nations system on conference follow-up, the task manager system could be used more systematically for reporting to the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions on the cross-cutting issues of the world conferences of the 1990s. It may be recalled that the model of task manager used for Agenda 21 entailed the delegation of authority to a specific United Nations organization for reviewing progress and lessons learned for each chapter or cluster of chapters under Agenda 21. The system has the advantage of committing the United Nations system through the delegation of responsibility to reporting on the conference, of recognizing the organizations' role and contributions and of streamlining issues, priorities and reporting. There has been some discussion among inter-agency bodies such as IACSD, CCPOQ and the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE) of expanding the system to include not only areas addressed by Agenda 21 but also relevant thematic outcomes of other conferences. Thus, ideally, a single organization or group of organizations would be in charge of reporting on a given cross-cutting area of conferences, such as resources, poverty reduction, health, education, or governance, to the various intergovernmental bodies, in cooperation with inter-agency bodies. It is also envisioned that the task manager system could be used for reporting on the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), focusing on themes such as shelter, social development and poverty reduction, environmental management, economic development and governance.[13]

23. With regard to the World Summit for Children more specifically, the adoption of the goals for children has become increasingly widespread within the United Nations system, as the goals of the Summit have been endorsed and built upon by other conferences. Yet the level of participation of the system in the preparation for the Summit's review continues to vary from organization to organization, and the preparations for the 10-year review are still thus far very much viewed as a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) concern. The Economic and Social Council could help building stronger inter-agency support to that process.

At the same time, there are considerable advantages to having a lead agency in charge of a conference. This was evidenced by the lead role played by UNICEF in the five-year review of the World Summit for Children and by the lead role played by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) together with the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat in the process of the five-year review of the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development.

24. Finally, it may be mentioned that the process adopted by the World Food Summit foresees frequent reviews by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Committee on World Food Security, which is an intergovernmental body. This Committee provides reports to the Council on a quadrennial basis. A full-scale review is scheduled after 10 years in 2006.[14]

Recommendations

25. The Economic and Social Council could encourage its functional commissions to ensure that the United Nations system is involved at an early stage in preparing the reviews of conferences. The Council could encourage United Nations agencies that have mandates and programmes in the field addressed by the conferences to ensure that their governing bodies are extensively involved in the preparations of the review.

26. The Economic and Social Council could encourage its functional commissions that have not yet done so, as well as the Commission on Human Settlements, to consider making greater use of the task manager system for reporting on conference themes, when relevant for a topic to be reviewed. The Council could furthermore invite ACC and its subsidiary machinery to develop proposals on the possible use of the task manager system for reporting on a broader range of cross-cutting conference themes.

27. The Economic and Social Council could encourage the Executive Board of UNICEF to look at ways to ensure that United Nations system organizations and the specialized agencies cooperate closely in the 10-year review of the World Summit for Children.

5. Maintaining the momentum of civil society's involvement

28. Civil society has participated in an extensive manner in the five-year reviews of the conferences, although not as extensively as it did in the conferences themselves (see also annex I).[15] At the same time, the nature of participation has evolved and has become more effective in several cases, both in intergovernmental meetings and at national level. Ensuring a broad input in the reviews by civil society including the private sector is important so that these reviews can draw upon diversified experiences as well as new ideas and proposals. It is also important to maintain the momentum generated at the conferences for involving civil society in the work of the United Nations and the implementation of the conferences. This is all the more necessary since the conferences, in particular the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), identified very specific responsibilities to be carried out by civil society and local authorities. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and its follow-up continue to be at the forefront with regard to the participation of major groups. Lessons may also be drawn from the five-year review of Beijing on how to use the Internet for involving civil society. Ten thousand individuals originating from more than 120 countries (42 per cent of participants were from developing countries) participated in the global on-line working groups held by WomenWatch on the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action.[16] The results were conveyed to the preparatory committee for the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.[17]

29. The Economic and Social Council should consider involving more systematically actors of civil society and particularly the private sector in its own work on conference follow-up at the high-level and coordination segments. Many efforts have been made to ensure that civil society organizations contribute to the work of the Council through panel discussions, and participation in the informal meetings of the Council as well as at its high-level segment, but this could be made more systematic.

Recommendations

30. The Economic and Social Council could invite its functional commissions and the United Nations system

to further support the involvement and participation of civil society, local authorities and the private sector in the upcoming conference reviews, looking at the experience gained in the context of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

31. The Economic and Social Council could consider ways and means of enabling civil society, local authorities and the private sector to contribute more systematically to the Economic and Social Council's discussions at the coordination or high-level segments such as on-line dialogue and the provision of written contributions.

B. Improving the follow-up and review of the conferences

1. Ways to improve the conference reviews

32. The challenge of reviewing conference implementation is of a dual nature. On the one hand, it requires pursuing an integrated and coordinated approach with a focus on common overarching conference goals. On the other hand, it also requires maintaining the identity and integrity of each conference by conducting a focused review as a means to stimulate progress in the core areas covered by conferences. In addition, there is a need to put to full use, in the conference reviews, each level of the three-tiered structure for conference follow-up, so that both the functional commissions and the Economic and Social Council support as effectively as possible the General Assembly in exercising its overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of conference results and facilitating and reviewing progress achieved. The functional commissions should continue to exercise their primary responsibility in follow-up and review of the conference for which they have the primary responsibility. The Council needs to pursue and deepen its work in addressing common conference themes and in coordinating conference follow-up and to ensure that its guidance in this area is taken into account in the conference reviews.

33. The modalities of the 10-year reviews are still to be established for a number of the conferences, with the exception of the World Summit for Children and the 10-year review of Agenda 21 for which the proposals of the Commission on Sustainable Development are before the Economic and Social Council (see annex II). Consequently, the Council still has the possibility of recommending to the General Assembly the adoption of a more effective and harmonized approach for the review of other conferences. To do so, the Council could invite its functional commissions to examine the following means of improving conference follow-up at intergovernmental level:

(a) One option might be to hold a single "10-year event" to review the conferences in a sequential manner,[18] be it an international conference or a special session of the General Assembly. Such a single event would be the culmination of a preparatory process encompassing the functional commissions and other relevant intergovernmental bodies, which would address core issues, as well as the Economic and Social Council, which would focus on cross-cutting issues;

(b) A second option might be to cluster the review of the implementation of several programmes of action found to be closely related at a special session of the General Assembly or other event. For example, the reviews of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States could be reviewed together. Similarly, the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women could be reviewed together in a separate cluster;

(c) A third option might be to stagger the follow-up processes so that there would be only one conference review in any given year. In this regard, the occurrence, for instance, in the same year of the 10-year reviews of the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women would be avoided;

(d) As a fourth option, 5-year conference reviews and appraisals could in the future be carried out by the functional commissions themselves, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly while special sessions of the Assembly or conferences would take place only for 10-year reviews. Indeed, it may be noted that the practice of holding special sessions of the General Assembly to review the implementation of conferences after five years is fairly recent.[19]

34. In reviewing these various options, the commissions should consider ways and means of

ensuring that they are well equipped for conducting their follow-up and monitoring of conference implementation. No matter what option is ultimately chosen, greater efforts should be made to ensure that, as the Economic and Social Council decided in 1995, the functional commissions focus on the core aspects of the conference of which they are in charge,[20] while at the same time cooperating with one another and with the Council on issues that cut across the outcomes of the conferences and their five-year reviews. It may be noted that there has already been significant progress towards this more focused approach.[21]

2. Other ways to further improve conference follow-up by the Economic and Social Council

(a) Role of the Economic and Social Council in examining cross-cutting conference themes

35. Irrespective of the manner in which the 10-year conference reviews will be conducted, a key message that can be drawn from the experience of the 5-year reviews is that the Economic and Social Council needs to continue to address cross-cutting conference goals, at both its coordination and high-level segments. It is particularly important that the Council continue to address the means to implement the conferences of the 1990s, in particular the building of an enabling environment at international level through enhanced international cooperation, increased and more effective use of official development assistance (ODA) and more coherent policies. This should help to affirm the crucial importance of international cooperation for achieving conference goals in the poorest countries, and to stimulate harmonized concrete efforts in this regard. Indeed, agreement at a single intergovernmental forum on a common set of critical elements of the enabling environment both at the national and at international level, including aspects related to human rights, governance, and social cohesion, would be of key importance and help to free time in the functional commissions to advance on sectoral aspects.[22]

36. The Economic and Social Council also has a role in ensuring that each conference follow-up and review, in addition to addressing individual core issues, also consider cross-cutting themes and the impact that the conference has on these goals.

37. Furthermore, the Economic and Social Council would need to examine the new challenges identified by the reviews that affect virtually the whole range of conference goals. This would help to ensure that these challenges are addressed in a consistent manner. In this regard, the functional commissions should bring to the Council's attention these new challenges that are additional to the ones already identified by the conferences.

38. For example, the preparatory process for the review of the World Summit for Social Development highlighted the fact that serious impediments to social development have increased, such as malnutrition, hunger, diseases, especially the HIV/AIDS pandemic, illicit drug problems and crime, ethnic and religious intolerance. The Economic and Social Council should also continue to address these major problems, which affect progress towards other conference goals. In the past, it has taken important steps to address HIV/AIDS, particularly by devoting a session to this issue. Furthermore, the Council, responding to the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, also recommended that Member States consider drug control as a cross-cutting issue in the context of coordinated follow-up to conferences.

39. In addition, the Economic and Social Council should help to maintain the focus on disaster preparedness, mitigation and recovery as well as on the impact of conflicts on conference goals. In this regard, efforts to link with the Security Council, ACC and other actors should be pursued. The Council should continue to give attention to goals related to conference follow-up at its humanitarian affairs segment.

40. The Economic and Social Council might need to meet to address in a timely manner major developments affecting conference goals. It has started to do so, *inter alia*, on such issues as the AIDS pandemic and Mozambique, and through its meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions; but it could do so for a broader range of issues.

41. Overall, the Economic and Social Council has devoted considerable time and efforts to bringing about a more integrated and coordinated approach to conference follow-up processes. It would now need to deepen its contribution on the substantive side and to help promote more coherent substantive approaches to common issues.

(b) Possible role of the Economic and Social in reviewing the quantified goals agreed at the conferences of the 1990s

42. There is a growing sense that the identification of a clear set of quantified goals and benchmarks is useful to help Governments and the United Nations system implement conference outcomes in an integrated manner.[23] A number of quantified goals emerged from the conferences of the 1990s in the area of basic social services for all. The five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development recommended interim benchmarks to measure progress in achieving goals (annex III gives example of such goals). Yet these goals would need to be complemented by goals in the area of finance for development — including the already agreed targets for ODA — and other aspects crucial for an enabling international environment. The Economic and Social Council could encourage the further development of quantified goals relating to conference objectives, and undertake to monitor progress towards achieving agreed goals and targets.

43. Section I concludes by noting that the five-year reviews helped to achieve considerable progress that will certainly help to boost the implementation of individual conferences. Yet, further efforts are needed to ensure that this process is conducted in a more integrated and coordinated fashion, leading to decisive, mutually reinforcing progress at national level and on cross-cutting conference themes. Notwithstanding the need to enhance conference reviews at intergovernmental level, a key challenge is to stimulate progress in implementing conference goals at national level, by Governments working in tandem with civil society partners and, often international organizations.

Recommendations

44. The Economic and Social Council could consider inviting its relevant functional commissions to review options and modalities for future conference reviews as spelled out in paragraph 33 above and to report on the outcome of this discussion to the Council at its substantive session of 2001.

45. The Economic and Social Council could reiterate that it will monitor the cross-cutting themes of the conferences of the 1990s and the new common challenges emerging from the five-year reviews at its coordination and high-level segments.

46. The Economic and Social Council could decide to monitor progress towards quantified goals and targets agreed at the conferences of the 1990s and their five-year reviews, based on an annual report prepared by the Secretary-General taking into account work in the Statistical Commission and other bodies.

47. The Economic and Social Council could invite the international community, and particularly the General Assembly in the context of the preparations of the 2001 high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development, to agree on further quantified targets related to the building of an international enabling environment for development.

II. Progress in the development of an integrated approach to conference implementation

A. Persistent challenges of integration and policy coherence

1. Continued commitment to an integrated approach

48. At the conferences of the 1990s, a broad consensus emerged that conference goals and, generally, development should be pursued based on an integrated and comprehensive approach. This has also been a guiding principle of the Economic and Social Council's efforts to coordinate the implementation of the conferences of the 1990s (these efforts are recapitulated in the box).

49. The five-year reviews showed that there continues to be generally strong political will to take an integrated approach to conferences goals. Efforts are being made at national level as well as internationally to integrate economic, social and environmental goals in gender-sensitive policy-making.[24] However, much remains to be done to bring about real integration among policies and programmes, at the national level and in international development cooperation.

Highlights of the Economic and Social Council's efforts thus far to coordinate the follow-up and implementation of conferences and summits of the 1990s

When it launched its major effort to coordinate the follow-up and implementation of the conferences of the 1990s by the United Nations system, the Economic and Social Council emphasized that, while each conference had its thematic unity, a coordinated follow-up implied that the major conferences should be viewed as interlinked and contributing to an integrated framework of and a global partnership for development.

With its agreed conclusions 1995/1 of July 1995, the Economic and Social Council engaged in a theme or goal-oriented approach to integrating the system's efforts to support Governments in implementing the conferences of the 1990s. In July 1995, the Council identified a series of goals common to all the conferences. By mid-2000, it will have addressed a good number of these themes. It has formulated in-depth guidance on gender mainstreaming, human rights, poverty eradication, the role of employment and work in poverty eradication from a gender perspective, and African development as well as on ways to foster an enabling environment for development, through trade and investment. In 2000, it will discuss "Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy" and human settlements. On each of these topics, it has provided policy and operational guidance to the United Nations system and — in many cases — to the international community at large. This issues-based guidance was supplemented by the Council's regular examination of the coordinated follow-up to conferences, *inter alia*, at a special dialogue meeting held in May 1998 with a broad range of representatives of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, which has enabled the Council to provide clear guidance to the United Nations system and its own subsidiary machinery on strengthening coordination and integration. A few main aspects of the Council's guidance are outlined here.

First, the Economic and Social Council has placed particular emphasis on working to ensure that the policies and approaches supported by the organizations of the United Nations system are more supportive of the broader conference goals. This need for coherence has been a main thrust in the Council's yearly debates among Governments and with the specialized agencies including trade and financial institutions. More particularly, the Council maintains a continuous dialogue with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has deepened in recent years particularly at the Council's special high-level meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions and through frequent exchanges with these organizations' governing boards. It has taken steps to deepen its dialogue with governing bodies of funds, programmes and specialized agencies as well as with the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). Yet, these partnerships need to be further strengthened to bring about more systematic concrete impact.

Second, the Economic and Social Council has taken a series of steps to improve the cooperation and the sharing of tasks among its functional commissions. As a result, the functional commissions have started to focus increasingly on core issues relating to the conference for which they are responsible and have obtained input from other relevant bodies on related issues. This is particularly visible in the case of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Council has also directed the regional commissions to pursue conference follow-up on a systematic basis by, *inter alia*, enhancing their interaction with the rest of the United Nations system.

Third, the Economic and Social Council has made consistent efforts to promote a coordinated delivery of assistance to Governments by the organizations of the United Nations system. Three inter-agency task forces set up by ACC worked during 1996 and 1997 to develop a set of guidelines to ensure coherent support to countries' efforts in the areas of full employment, basic social services for all and an enabling environment for development. ACC also adopted general guidelines on the integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences. The Council oversaw this work and ensured that helping the Government to coordinate conference implementation should be a key responsibility of the United Nations resident coordinator system. It has directed the resident coordinator system to use thematic groups on conference cross-cutting themes and the existing collaborative frameworks, including United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the common country assessment (CCA), for supporting Governments, at their request, in developing strategies for integrated conference follow-up. The Council also gave guidance to the subsidiary machinery of ACC on how to exercise their responsibilities in coordinating the follow-up to conferences.[a]

Finally, in July 1999, the Economic and Social Council took steps to advance the integration and cooperation in the area of basic indicators for the integrated conference follow-up. It made a set of recommendations to enhance international efforts to build national statistical capacity in developing countries, and to facilitate further harmonization and rationalization of basic indicators in the context of conference follow-up, as well as to further develop indicators relating to the means of implementation of the conferences of the 1990s. The Council has before it a progress report on the implementation of its guidance in this area (E/2000/60).

[a] More information on these aspects is contained in the reports of the Secretary-General on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (E/1998/19 and E/1999/65). The Economic and Social Council's most recent guidance is contained in its resolutions 1998/44 and 1999/55 and in its agreed conclusions adopted at its high-level segment and coordination segments.

2. Progress in integrated strategies

50. The five-year reviews also indicate that deeper efforts are needed to translate such an integrated approach into effective action through national action plans and strategies to implement conference outcomes.[25] Obviously, the primary responsibility for conference follow-up lies with the Government, while United Nations system organizations have a role in facilitation and support of Governments, provided at their request, in implementing conferences and integrating their efforts in this regard.

51. The five-year reviews do not give very clear indications as to the extent to which Governments have developed "cross-sectoral strategies" for the implementation of all conferences. They indicate that national strategies focus by and large on individual conferences, and on such overarching goals as gender, poverty, the environment, health and education.

52. The development of an integrated strategy is important to help countries set their own priorities and objectives among all of the goals identified by the various conferences. As national sustainable development strategies attempt to link the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development, they have the potential to serve as the basis for an integrated strategy to implement other conference goals. This was recognized by the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, which set the target date of 2002 for developing national sustainable development strategies.[26] However, thus far, it appears that, in many countries, there has been relatively limited progress in integrating economic, social and other areas in the context of national sustainable development strategies. Also, while economic and social dimensions figure prominently in most local Agenda 21 programmes, there are cases where these documents focus primarily on environmental issues, thereby limiting their potential to serve as a platform for the local implementation of other conferences such as the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat II), for instance. As Governments are working to develop sustainable development strategies by 2002, it is crucial to ensure that sustainable development strategies are effectively developed as a platform for a more integrated approach to conference goals.

53. With regard to other conferences, very few Governments have developed comprehensive strategies for implementing the World Summit for Social Development, as required in the Summit's outcome. Two thirds of the countries have developed poverty eradication strategies. Yet, while most poverty programmes identify a set of targeted interventions, they do not always define a global strategy, that is to say, a broader set of national policies, including macroeconomic and governance policies, that are pro-poor. Most poverty programmes do not pay enough attention to gender inequality as a major source of poverty and do not address the issue of environment and natural resources, even in countries where environmental degradation has a major impact on the poor.[27] The need to address the broader international context and its impact on poverty is not always recognized. Also, whereas a number of national action plans and strategies for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action refer to the need to mainstream gender in other policy areas, they rarely establish a clear linkage to strategies to implement other conferences.

54. Overall, the main challenges to integrated conference implementation continue to be the need to (a) effectively incorporate economic, social and environmental concerns in the design of policies nationally and internationally and (b) foster an enabling environment for development at national and international levels, particular ensuring greater consistency among macroeconomic, trade, aid, financial, social and environmental policies, so that all support agreed development goals.

55. The conferences recognized the crucial importance of international cooperation for helping developing countries to achieve conference goals. A key message running through the five-year reviews of conferences is that international support in the implementation of conferences has fallen far short of the commitments made at conferences. As regards the International Conference on Population and Development, for instance, international population assistance remains at only roughly 36 per cent of the $5.7 billion target agreed in Cairo as the international community's share in financing the programme of action.[28] Recent reports point to a continuing decline in ODA contributions.[29] These shrinking resources jeopardize the priorities identified by the conferences and leads to competition among them.[30] In addition to the Economic and Social Council's own efforts in this regard, the high-level international intergovernmental

event on financing for development to be held by the General Assembly in 2001 will be the occasion to address in a comprehensive manner the mobilization of financial resources for the full implementation of the outcome of the major United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s and, as discussed above (paras. 41 and 46), to possibly agree on targets regarding the enabling environment for development.

Recommendations

56. The Economic and Social Council could invite Governments, in developing sustainable development strategies by 2002, to ensure that they address overarching conference goals such as poverty eradication, gender equality, and development of the poorest countries in an integrated manner.

57. The Economic and Social Council could call on Governments to mobilize resources for implementing conference goals and urge donor countries to meet the commitments made at the conferences of the 1990s and their five-year reviews regarding enhanced ODA and international cooperation. The Council could encourage the international intergovernmental event on financing for development to make concrete advances with respect to addressing in a comprehensive manner the mobilization of financial resources for conference implementation, and invite its functional commissions to use the outcome of that event in their work on conference follow-up.

B. Deepening the United Nations system's efforts towards collaboration in achieving common conference goals

58. The five-year reviews highlight the fact that conferences have galvanized the United Nations system into action and cooperation. United Nations system organizations are now sharpening the focus of their activities, while realizing that the solutions to many of the problems are to be found outside their given sector of expertise. The need for an integrated approach pervades the strategies of organizations of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Comprehensive Development Framework of the World Bank, the Poverty Reduction Strategy papers of the Bank and IMF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) mission statement and the new approach of the World Health Organization (WHO) to health and poverty. Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to conferences are also very often a reality de facto, in the implementation by the United Nations system of programmes in such cross-cutting areas as education, health, the advancement and sharing of knowledge and water. The present section highlights a few areas where the United Nations system could further strengthen its support to Governments in implementing the outcomes of the conferences of the 1990s in an integrated manner.

1. Ensuring coherence between economic, social and environmental aspects

59. Cooperation between the United Nations system, the World Trade Organization and the Bretton Woods institutions is crucial to advancing conference goals in the area of social development, environmental protection, the building of an enabling environment for development and progress of the poorest countries. The five-year reviews of conferences recognized that the World Bank and IMF are strengthening their focus on conference goals, particularly on the social development dimension of structural adjustment;[31] but they also called on these institutions to further strengthen their support in implementing these goals and addressed many recommendations to them, ranging from the very general to the very specific. A number of further specific recommendations are being discussed in the preparatory process for the review of the World Summit for Social Development. As it continues to deepen dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions, the Economic and Social Council should continue to play an important role in the debate on how these various recommendations are being put into practice with the support of the Bretton Woods institutions. Indeed, the ongoing review of the World Summit for Social Development has discussed the possibility that the Council might focus systematically on conference implementation at its special meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions — and, in many respects, the Council actually already does this.

60. The demonstrations that surrounded the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Seattle highlighted the complexity of the interrelationships between trade and economic, social and environmental dimensions. In this regard, as outlined by the Secretary-General repeatedly, it is crucial that States implement the common standards that exist in the

social, environmental and other areas. ACC can also play an important role in prompting a collective response by the United Nations system to the challenges of globalization. ACC has discussed globalization for a year now. At its April 2000 session, it addressed the interlinkages between trade, environment and social dimensions. It encouraged the United Nations system to work together in mutually supportive ways to ensure that globalization worked towards poverty eradication and other conference goals, *inter alia*, through the building of networking arrangements. It is therefore important that the Economic and Social Council further deepen its dialogue with ACC on this topic. The Council should also further deepen its dialogue with the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), all the more so inasmuch as UNCTAD, at Bangkok, was called upon to play an important role in bringing a development perspective to globalization.

Recommendations

61. The Economic and Social Council could reaffirm that it will address, as appropriate, issues relating to the follow-up to the outcome of the conferences and their five-year reviews at its meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions.

62. The Economic and Social Council could consider holding a special meeting with UNCTAD and the World Trade Organization on progress towards goals agreed at conferences and their five-year reviews.

63. Likewise, the Economic and Social Council could consider organizing dialogue sessions with clusters of United Nations system organizations on specific themes relating to conference follow-up.

2. Filling the gap between conference outcomes and country assistance programmes

64. Although Governments have the primary responsibility for implementing conference outcomes in a coordinated and integrated manner at the country level, the United Nations system organizations support their work by ensuring that the conference outcomes serve as objectives for United Nations system programmes, particularly with respect to the different conference themes and/or sectoral areas. United Nations system instruments such as thematic groups on cross-cutting issues and the use of the lead agency concept have been very effective in supporting Governments in conference-to-conference follow-up but have not necessarily helped achieve an integrated approach. The United Nations system has consistently pursued coherence between a more integrated approach to country-level conference follow-up and programming of its operational activities for development through the introduction by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the common country assessment (CCA) and the CCA Indicator Framework.[32] Already, in a number of countries, a CCA has provided a database and set of indicators to review progress on achieving conference goals; and UNDAF has provided a framework for aligning national priorities and conference programmes of action as well as for achieving a more integrated United Nations support to conference follow-up. Other country-level mechanisms such as round tables and consultative groups have fostered dialogue with and supported the involvement of other relevant actors in the follow-up to global conferences, and are becoming instrumental in effectively linking local development projects/programmes with policies and actions at the national and international levels. The Poverty Reduction Strategy papers (PRSPs) introduced by the World Bank and IMF and the Comprehensive Development Framework of the World Bank also provide new tools for strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions in order to help Governments pursue poverty eradication and other conference goals.

65. Among these tools, there is the ACC material on basic social services, which helps country teams gain a better understanding of where each agency can bring its expertise to bear in support of poverty eradication. Other instruments include the UNDG girls' education strategy. A poverty action strategy is currently being designed by UNDG. The ACC guidance notes for the resident coordinator system are also being used to a certain extent as a framework for the translation of global goals into the agencies' national policies and operational activities.[33] For example, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has included them in the United Nations system materials provided to its country representatives for the implementation of the goals and plans of action of the international conferences. The United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO) has included them on its web site, which is accessible to resident coordinators and United

Nations country teams, and in the CD-ROM on CCA and UNDAF guidelines that was also circulated to United Nations country teams.

66. A gap between conference outcomes and the objectives of the actual country assistance programmes still persists in some areas. Operational tools and methodological frameworks and models for their country-specific application are still insufficient.[34] As a result, cross-cutting themes and goals emerging from the global conferences have not been sufficiently integrated into programmes' priorities in a coherent manner, and steps still need to be taken to develop complementary and collaborative approaches within United Nations organizations to promoting the implementation of global targets linking specialized branches of the Governments, members of civil society and the international community.

67. The year 2000 five-year review exercise of individual conferences provides an opportunity to concerned United Nations system organizations to revisit programme priorities, identify obstacles, accelerate the implementation process and generally revisit national plans of action accordingly. One lesson learned so far, in the preliminary review, is that the establishment of a limited set of quality data to determine the achievements and gaps that may remain in the implementation of global conferences is a key element in the integrated implementation of conference action plans.[35] Another lesson is that the identification of linkages between conference goals facilitates the development of more integrated sectoral interventions.[36]

68. A more integrated support to United Nations international conferences and summits is expected to be further strengthened during 2000 when the conference indicators will be developed as part of the CCA Indicator Framework. UNDAF and CCA have the potential to become the main instruments for the system-wide integrated follow-up in the process of planning, programming and action at the country level. One of the tests for the effectiveness of these instruments in their upcoming evaluation in 2001 will be their capacity to translate the sum of conference outcomes into the objectives of actual development assistance programmes.

Recommendations

69. The Economic and Social Council might wish to re-emphasize the need to develop operational tools for conference follow-up at the country level that take into account the need to link follow-up to individual conferences, including the five-year reviews, to the integrated follow-up to all conferences.

70. The Economic and Social Council might also wish to encourage United Nations system organizations to continue to build on national data sets to develop key system-wide indicators related to global conferences and to link these efforts to country-specific poverty eradication initiatives.

3. Integrating the regional dimension

71. The need of a regional dimension for the implementation of conference goals at regional level has been recognized by the Economic and Social Council on previous occasions.[37] The United Nations regional commissions have complemented national efforts by organizing regional conferences and reviewing progress made at regional level, related particularly to the preparation for the five-year reviews of conferences. The Council's attention is drawn to the report on regional cooperation on the theme "Follow-up to major conferences and summits: exchanges of regional experiences" which is also before the Council.

4. Mobilizing partnerships and participation

72. In the recent past, the formation of "global policy networks" of international institutions, civil society and private sector organizations and national Governments has emerged as a powerful new way of mobilizing the support for common goals. The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) exemplifies what can be achieved through such partnerships. The Global Fund for Children's Vaccines, which GAVI launched in January 2000, should help to strengthen the delivery of vaccines in the poorest countries and the development of new vaccines. The International Partnership against AIDS in Africa, under the leadership of African Governments, is mobilizing unprecedented support to curtail the epidemic and address its impact on human and economic development. It is also promoting a more comprehensive and multisectoral response to the development challenges posed by the epidemic. Other examples include the Roll Back Malaria global initiative,[38] and, recently, the second Worldwide Water

Forum where safe drinking water supply and sanitation have been given highest priority by the various agencies, non-governmental organizations, Governments and donors who participated in developing a partnership and framework for future action.[39] The Secretary-General, in his report to the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" (A/54/2000), has stressed that the United Nations system needs a more focused and systematic approach regarding its involvement in global policy networks.

73. Generally, there is a need to provide assistance for strengthening the capacities of Governments who request it — both central and local — and of their civil society partners for implementing conferences. Habitat II has mobilized the involvement of local authorities and civil society partners and has given a strong impetus to institution development and capacity building in the field of human settlement. Improvements of capacities of local governments to manage challenges of local participatory development will contribute to the achievements of many conference goals in a context of growing localization and globalization.

Recommendations

74. The Economic and Social Council could note the important contribution that global policy networks or alliances can make to implementing conference goals and encourage the United Nations system to become actively engaged in such networks and contribute to them, *inter alia*, through the use of modern information and communication technologies.

75. The Economic and Social Council could underscore the importance of building national capacities for implementing conference outcomes, and reiterate that capacity-building should be an explicit objective of programmes and projects supported by the United Nations system.

Notes

[1] Namely, those for the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development and the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The five-year reviews of the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women will be completed only in June 2000, and therefore are addressed by referring only to their provisional texts. Similarly, the review of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) will be conducted in 2001. References are made to the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All.

[2] Inputs were received from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the Joint United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) (UNAIDS), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the United Nations University (UNU), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

[3] In the case of the World Summit for Social Development, the decision to hold a mid-term special session of the General Assembly was contained in the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. The holding of a special session was envisioned in Agenda 21 (which stated that the Assembly could consider holding such a session no later than 1997) and the Habitat Agenda, but was not mentioned in the Beijing Platform for Action or in the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development.

[4] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[5] It may be recalled that UNICEF is coordinating a global end-decade review of the progress made in implementing the shared goals for children reflected in the outcomes of the World Summit for Children (see table 2).

[6] See agreed conclusions 1995/1 of the Economic and Social Council (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/50/3/Rev.1), chap. III, para. 22) and the report of the

Secretary-General (E/1995/86) on coordinated follow-up to major international conferences in the economic, social and related fields.

[7] See the ministerial communiqué on market access of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 1998 of the Economic and Social Council submitted by the President of the Council (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/53/3 and Corr.1 and Add.1), chap. IV, para. 5.

[8] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1 and Add.1), chap. IV, para. 4.

[9] Given that Governments must prepare periodic reports on their human rights treaty obligations, in relation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex), UNICEF analysed the declarations and plans of action of the major conferences and grouped these against the standards in the Convention. This provided a clear map of issues relevant to children signalled in each of the conferences, and provided direction to United Nations agencies, Governments and other partners for standard-setting and action flowing from the Conferences.

[10] Agreed conclusions 1995/1 of the Economic and Social Council.

[11] The report on regional cooperation on the theme "Follow-up to major conferences and summits: exchanges of regional experiences" is also before the Economic and Social Council.

[12] The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) furthermore stressed the importance of early and timely contributions from the United Nations system to the preparatory process. It proposed that the reports of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the General Assembly and the high-level segment of the Commission on Sustainable Development in the context of preparations of the 10-year review should not only focus on process-related issues but also highlight the main policy issues and main challenges in the area of sustainable development. The preparation of the critical trends report should be expedited and its results made public at an early stage so as to raise awareness about consequences of current unsustainable development tendencies (ACC/2000/1).

[13] More details are contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the coordinated implementation by the United Nations system of the Habitat Agenda (A/55/83-E/2000/62).

[14] See annex II and earlier reports on the integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences, which also provide information on the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS) and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Network on Rural Development and Food Security.

[15] For instance, 376 representatives of 153 non-governmental organizations participated in the five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development in 1999 and a few non-governmental organizations took the floor during the governmental meeting. (During the Cairo conference in 1994, more than 4,200 individuals and representatives of over 1,500 non-governmental organizations took part in the NGO Forum '94 held parallel to the conference.) For Beijing, over 5,000 representatives from 2,100 non-governmental organizations attended the conference and nearly 30,000 individuals attended the independent NGO Forum '95. It is estimated that 3,106 non-governmental representatives will participate in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

[16] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[17] See note by the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2000/PC/CRP.1) transmitting the summary of the WomenWatch online working groups on the twelve critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action.

[18] Such a single "10-year event" implies that some conference reviews would take place before, while others would occur after, their 10-year anniversary.

[19] In the past, the quinquennial review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations world population conferences, for instance, were conducted by the Commission on Population and Development. The review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (*Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A) in 1990 were conducted by the Commission on the Status of Women.

[20] The Economic and Social Council in its agreed conclusions 1995/1 recommended that the functional commissions focus on the core issue relating to the conference for which they were responsible, and obtain inputs from other related bodies on related issues.

[21] Thus, further to the five-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Commission on Sustainable Development does not deal directly with those thematic areas of Agenda 21 that were developed by the outcomes of other conferences and accordingly, fall within the competence of other commissions of the Economic and Social Council such

as poverty, population and human settlements. For these issues, other relevant functional commissions report to the General Assembly through the Council on how their activities are contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the programme for its further implementation. The Commission on the Status of Women increasingly cooperates with the Commission on Human Rights. The World Summit for Children, while not falling within the purview of a specific functional commission, benefits from having the Executive Board of UNICEF closely involved with focused monitoring of the follow-up. A number of reports are before the Council on the cooperation among functional commissions: see consolidated report on the work of functional commissions in 2000 (E/2000/__); and report on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields and on cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions (E/2000/__).

[22] It may be recalled that the Economic and Social Council discussed issues of the enabling national and international environment in 1997 and 1998. In 1996, it had decided that it would discuss such issues, including the mobilization of resources, and that the functional commissions should focus their consideration on aspects that fell within their respective areas of competence (agreed conclusions 1996/1 on poverty eradication (see *Official Records of the General Assembly, 1996, Supplement No. 3* (A/51/3/Rev.1), chap. III, para. 2)).

[23] The experience of the World Summit for Children and its review show the usefulness of such goals. A message emerging from the examination of national reports on the review of the implementation of the outcome of the Beijing conference was that Governments and non-governmental organizations should cooperate to devise realistic targets and ways of measuring progress for all critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action.

[24] In regard to Agenda 21, it was noted that extensive efforts have been made since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development by Governments and international organizations to integrate environmental, economic and social objectives into decision-making through the elaboration of strategies for sustainable development. The mid-term review of the implementation of the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development highlighted the fact that many Governments had taken steps to integrate population concerns into their development strategies. The preparatory process of the five-year review of the World Summit for Social Development is indicating that there has been growing awareness of the need to reconcile economic and social policy. Governments have recognized the importance of making social advances an integral part of development strategy at the national and international levels, as well as of putting people at the centre of development efforts. Poverty eradication and employment promotion are increasingly placed at the centre of socio-economic development. National reports on the Fourth World Conference on Women suggest that the importance of a gender equality approach to policy-making is generally recognized. Policy makers have started to operate within the broad framework of sustainable human development, taking into account the need for equal opportunities and choices for women.

[25] Some nine different national action plans can be identified. The World Summit for Children called for national programmes of action (NPAs); the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, for national strategies for sustainable development, by 2002; the World Conference on Human Rights, for national action plans identifying steps for the promotion of human rights; the World Summit for Social Development, for comprehensive cross-sectoral strategies for implementing the outcome of the Summit as well as for national poverty eradication plans; the Fourth World Conference on Women, for national strategies or plans of action for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action; the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), for national plans of action and/or other relevant national programmes and actions to achieve the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development, as well as for local plans of action. As for the World Food Summit, it requested that national plans, programmes and strategies should be reviewed and revised as appropriate with a view to achieving food security consistent with the Summit's commitments. FAO undertook to prepare with Governments concerned "national strategies for agricultural development and food security: horizon 2000" for 150 developing and transition member countries of the organization (regional strategies and action plans were also prepared). Recently, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, countries agreed to prepare a comprehensive national Education for All (EFA) plan by 2002 (in the context of wider poverty reduction and development strategies).

[26] As stated in General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex, paragraph 24, sustainable development strategies are important mechanisms for enhancing and linking national capacity so as to bring together priorities in social, economic and environmental policies.

[27] UNDP, *2000 Poverty Report*.

[28] See report of the Secretary-General on the flow of financial resources for assisting in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (E/CN.9/2000/5 and Corr.1).

[29] See report of the Secretary-General on financial resources and mechanisms (E/CN.17/2000/2).

[30] For instance, the Habitat Agenda (*Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II) called for raising the priority of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development among donors and mobilizing their support for the plans of action developed by developing countries. The Beijing Platform for Action calls for a greater share of international financial assistance to be directed towards implementing the Platform for Action.

[31] See proposed outcome: revised text submitted by the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world": review and assessment of implementation (A/AC.253/L.5/Rev.2 (Part II), para. 37).

[32] See progress report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192 for the operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation segment of the substantive session of 2000 of the Economic and Social Council (E/2000/46/Add.1), for more details.

[33] The ACC second guidance note, along with the ACC inter-agency task forces established by ACC on basic social services for all, full employment and sustainable livelihoods, and an enabling environment for economic and social development, provides policy orientations and sets of guidelines.

[34] See the 1998 resident coordinator annual reports review conducted by UNDGO last year and presented to the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ).

[35] See the progress report on basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits at all levels (E/2000/60).

[36] For instance, UNFPA has made sustained efforts to identify linkages between population, poverty and environmental factors for integrated programming purposes in keeping with the International Conference on Population and Development. Many collaborative programmes are in place with UNFPA, UNICEF and UNESCO for the education of the girl child (see the 1999 report of the Executive Director of UNFPA to the Economic and Social Council (E/1999/47, sect. II). The Executive Board committed UNICEF repeatedly (1995-1998) to the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (*Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex) in the following three areas: women's and girls' rights, girls' education, and women's health, although the scope of the country programmes has been enlarged (see the 1999 report of the Executive Director of UNICEF to the Economic and Social Council, part one (E/1999/9)).

[37] Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1995/1 and Council resolution 1998/44.

[38] The initiative aimed at mobilizing partnerships and resources in order to reduce malaria mortality by 50 per cent by 2010, launched in 1998 by WHO, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank.

[39] The Forum was organized in The Hague in March 2000 by the Global Water Partnership and World Water Council.

Annex I

Recent reviews of conferences: selected characteristics

	Contribution of United Nations system organizations to the conference reviews	*Technical meetings*	*Modalities of civil society's involvement in the review*	*National and regional preparations*
Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (10-year review, World Education Forum)	World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF sponsor the World Education Forum. They guided the assessment through an inter-agency steering committee and technical advisory groups at global and regional levels. ACC adopted a statement on the United Nations 10-year programme on girls' education which was presented at the World Education Forum.	Fourteen thematic studies on educational issues of global concern (for example, applying new technologies in education, demographic transition and education, donor contributions to EfA).	Some 300 participants attended the international consultation held in Dakar prior to the World Education Forum. Sixty non-governmental organizations participated in the World Education Forum.	A two-year Education for All assessment was conducted in 181 countries by national teams in coordination with advisory groups from sponsoring organizations. Country reports were examined at six regional conferences which adopted regional education action plans and made recommendations for the World Education Forum.
World Summit for Children (5-year review in 1996)	UNICEF was entrusted with supporting the implementation of the World Summit for Children and its review, in cooperation with other relevant agencies. Activities of UNICEF, ILO, WHO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO and other organizations to help implement the World Summit for Children were reflected in the review.			Sixty Governments carried out multiple cluster indicators surveys for monitoring World Summit for Children goals; additional data was collected through other surveys. UNICEF assisted national Governments and regional groups in undertaking both national and regional reviews of the Plan of Action for implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s and meetings.
United Nations Conference on Environment and Development	United Nations system organizations reported on sectoral/cross-sectoral issues of Agenda 21 in context of the IACSD task manager system; UNCTAD furnished a report on trade and environment and WHO on world health and the environment. ACC adopted a statement on sustainable development.	A number of expert groups on topics such as changing consumption and production patterns, financial issues, special measures for least developed countries, and indicators for sustainable development were organized by the United Nations, Governments and major groups.	The Commission on Sustainable Development (fifth session) held dialogue sessions with all Agenda 21 major groups that identified challenges and made recommendations. Fourteen thousand individuals representing major groups participated in the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly.	One hundred country profiles outlining progress in implementing Agenda 21 were prepared (half were submitted by Governments, half compiled by the Secretariat based on earlier reports submitted by Governments to the Commission on Sustainable Development).

	Contribution of United Nations system organizations to the conference reviews	*Technical meetings*	*Modalities of civil society's involvement in the review*	*National and regional preparations*
				ESCAP regional meeting on indicators of sustainable development for Asia and the Pacific; Summit Conference of the Americas on Sustainable Development organized by Fundación Futuro Latino America.
World Conference on Human Rights	United Nations system organizations submitted reports to contribute to the review process. The report furnished to the Economic and Social Council coordination segment was prepared in the framework of inter-agency consultations organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.		The 1998 Global NGO Forum on the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (June 1998) submitted its final document as an input to the review as did a few other civil society organizations.	Forty-eight Governments furnished reports for the review.
International Conference on Population and Development	UNFPA played a major role in the five-year review of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development together with the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat. The inter-agency Task Force on Basic Social Services for all organized the technical symposium on international migration. UNFPA organized seven round-table and technical meetings in preparation for the five-year review and the Hague Forum on the Operational Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development. Several United Nations system organizations collaborated in round tables and technical meetings. The Population Division prepared the quinquennial review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme	Three round-table meetings on (a) adolescent reproductive health, (b) reproductive rights and implementation of reproductive health programmes, women's empowerment, male involvement and human rights and (c) partnership with civil society. Four technical symposia: (a) international migration and development, (b) population ageing, (c) reproductive health services in crisis situations and (d) population change and economic development.	One hundred fifty-three non-governmental organizations (376 representatives) participated in the five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development; three non-governmental organizations took the floor during the plenary meeting. A round-table meeting was held in Bangladesh in July 1998 on "partnership with civil society to implement the Programme of Action, International Conference on Population and Development". Civil society participated in round tables and technical meetings and in the Hague Forum which was preceded by three meetings, of parliamentarians, a non-governmental organization forum, and a youth forum.	Regional consultations were convened by the five United Nations regional commissions. UNFPA conducted a global field inquiry in 1998 to assess progress and constraints (114 developing countries and countries in transition). The Eighth Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development contributed to the review.

	Contribution of United Nations system organizations to the conference reviews	*Technical meetings*	*Modalities of civil society's involvement in the review*	*National and regional preparations*
	of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. UNFPA prepared the report on the international forum for the operational review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action and the report of the Secretary-General for the special session of the General Assembly containing draft measures for the further implementation of the Programme of Action. UNICEF 1995 Executive Board paper defined its follow-up to the Conference as did the 1998 report submitted to the Executive Board.			
Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States	United Nations system organizations reported on different aspects of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States through the task manager system.	See Committee for Development Policy work on vulnerability, World Bank/Commonwealth secretariat work on small States.		Four regional meetings of Caribbean, African, Pacific island, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and Atlantic Ocean small island developing States.
World Summit for Social Development	Upon the invitation of the Preparatory Committee, United Nations system organs and specialized agencies provided review reports and proposals for further action and initiatives. A total of 25 reports on specific issues were submitted to the Preparatory Committee. ILO organized an international consultation concerning the Summit follow-up.	Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, in cooperation with Governments, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, organized expert meetings symposia and workshops on themes related to the World Summit for Social Development (value and market economies, socio-economic development in countries with economies in transition, globalization and employment).		Regional commissions convened regional and subregional meetings and workshops on the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development outcome. Over 80 Governments submitted national reports on the implementation of the Summit outcome.

	Contribution of United Nations system organizations to the conference reviews	*Technical meetings*	*Modalities of civil society's involvement in the review*	*National and regional preparations*
Fourth World Conference on Women	ACC adopted a statement on women and gender equality as an input to the five-year review of the outcome of the Beijing Conference. The Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality had the five-year review of the outcome of the Beijing Conference in its agenda. The Commission on the Status of Women was provided with a report on the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for gender mainstreaming. Individual organizations reflected on their contributions to implementing the Beijing outcomes: for example, the Executive Board of UNICEF in January 1996 approved follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action in three priority areas (girls' education; health of girls, adolescents and women; women's rights and children's rights).	Expert group meetings were organized in the context of the Commission on the Status of Women work programme on the follow-up to the Beijing outcome.	WomenWatch Online working groups on the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action E/CN.6/2000/PC/CRP.1). Three thousand one hundred six representatives of non-governmental organizations will participate in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.	The five regional commissions convened regional meetings to review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action or regional plans of action. One hundred forty-two Member States and two observers responded to the questionnaire of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.
United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)	Inter-agency consultations will be held in June 2000 to prepare the review and appraisal.	A number of meetings were held on the global campaign on secure tenure, urban governance, world charter on self-governance.	Several meetings were held with non-governmental organizations, local authorities and parliamentarians.	Regional meetings are being held.

Annex II

Upcoming reviews of conferences

	Next review	*Preparations envisioned thus far*	*Role of the Economic and Social Council in the review*
World Summit for Children	Special session of the General Assembly in 2001 to review achievements of the Summit goals (Assembly resolution 51/186)	Planning for a special session on children in 2001 includes a strong partnership with Governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, the media and young people themselves; it further entails the development of evaluations, studies and national and regional reviews to assess achievements made, constraints encountered and lessons learned from the decade. A series of thematic debates are also being held, in addition to preparatory work in the Executive Board of UNICEF	Council has before it the report of the Executive Director of UNICEF
World Conference on Human Rights	No decision has been taken yet for the 10-year anniversary of the World Conference on Human Rights in 2003	—	—
International Conference on Population and Development	A second quinquennial review and appraisal are scheduled in 2004	The members of the Commission will discuss the format of that review at a later session	Council may advise on format of the review at its substantive session of 2000
Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States	Ten-year review in 2004		
World Summit for Social Development	Ten-year review in 2005		
Fourth World Conference on Women	Ten-year review in 2005		
United Nations Conference on Environment and Development	Ten-year review in 2002	To be decided at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly	The report of the Commission on Sustainable Development containing proposals for the 2002 review is before the Council
United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)	Five-year review in 2001 Ten-year review in 2006	See E/2000/62	Coordination segment of the substantive session of 2000

	Next review	*Preparations envisioned thus far*	*Role of the Economic and Social Council in the review*
Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries	2001	Intergovernmental preparatory committee, preceded by three regional meetings (General Assembly resolution 52/187)	
United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s	General Assembly review in 2002	Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries of the United Nations Secretariat are jointly undertaking preparations. An independent evaluation of the performance of the new agenda was requested by the Council	Coordination segment of the substantive session of 1999 on development of Africa; a high-level segment by 2002 on African development.
World Food Summit	FAO Committee on World Food Security will undertake, in 2006, a mid-term review of progress in reducing the number of undernourished to half their 1996 level no later than 2015. The Committee on World Food Security also monitors the implementation of the World Food Security Plan of Action biennially starting September 2000.		The outcome of the Committee on World Food Security review will be transmitted to the Council. Council receives regular reports through the FAO Council on implementation of the Plan of Action as monitored by the FAO Committee on World Food Security.

Annex III

Examples of quantified goals and targets adopted by international conferences of the 1990s and their five-year reviews

The present table highlights a number of quantified goals and targets adopted by the conference of the 1990s. It makes use of some goals listed in the United Nations common country assessment (CCA) and highlights a few more goals and benchmarks.

Area	*Conference goals*
Poverty	Reduce the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by one half by the year 2015 with a view to eradicating poverty (draft outcome document, five-year review of WSSD, para. 24) (CCA)
Food security and nutrition	
Improved child nutrition	By the year 2000, a reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among children under five years of age by half of the 1990 level (WSSD, FWCW, WSC, WCN) (CCA), giving special attention to the gender gap in nutrition (FWCW)
Increased food security	Reduce number of chronically undernourished by half their 1996 level by 2015 (WFS) (CCA)
Health and mortality	
Improved health care	Universal accessibility of primary health care (by 2000) (WSSD, ICPD, FWCW, WFS, HfA) (CCA)
Reduction in levels of HIV/AIDS	Universal access to reproductive health services and information by 2015 (ICPD) (CCA) By 2005, 90 per cent and by 2010, 95 per cent, of young women and men aged 15-24 will have access to information, education and services necessary to develop life skills required to reduce vulnerability to HIV infection; HIV infection rate in persons 15-24 to be reduced globally by 2005 (by 25 per cent in most affected countries), and by 2010 to be reduced globally by 25 per cent (ICPD + 5)
Reduced infant mortality	Reduction of infant mortality rates by one third of the 1990 level and below 35 per 1,000 by 2015 (ICPD, WSSD, FWCW, WSC, WFS, WCHR) (CCA)
Reduced child morality	Reduction of under-five mortality rates by two thirds of 1990 level by 2015/to below 45 per 1,000 live births by 2015 (CCA) (ICPD, WSSD, WSC)
Eradication and control of major diseases	Eradicate, eliminate or control major diseases constituting global health problems by 2000 (WSSD)

Area	*Conference goals*
Improved maternal health and reduced maternal mortality	Reduction of maternal mortality by one half of the 1990 level by 2000 and by a further half by 2015 (ICPD — with goals for countries with high/intermediate mortality; WSSD, FWCW, WSC) (CCA)
	By 2005, where the maternal mortality rate is very high, at least 40 per cent of all births should be assisted by skilled attendants; by 2010, this figure should be at least 50 per cent; and by 2015, at least 60 per cent. All countries should continue their efforts so that globally, by 2005, 80 per cent of all births should be assisted by skilled attendants; by 2010, 85 per cent; and by 2015, 90 per cent (General Assembly resolution S-21/2, annex, para. 64)
Ensuring voluntary quality family planning services	By 2015, universal access to a full range of safe and reliable family planning methods and related reproductive health services that are not against the law (ICPD) (CCA).
	By 2015, all primary health care and family planning facilities to provide the widest achievable range of family planning/ contraceptive methods; essential obstetric care; and prevention/management of reproductive tract infections including sexually transmitted diseases, and barrier methods to prevent infection. By 2005, 60 per cent of such facilities should be able to offer this range of services, and by 2010, 80 per cent of them should be able to offer such services (General Assembly resolution S-21/2, annex, para. 53).
	Close the gap between contraceptive use and proportion of those desiring to space/limit families by 50 per cent by 2005, 75 per cent by 2010 and 100 per cent by 2050 (General Assembly resolution S-21/2, annex, para. 58).
Education	
Increased access to basic education	Universal access and completion of primary education by 2015 (EfA, WSSD, FWCW, WSC, ICPD, WEF) (CCA); by 2010, net primary school enrolment ratio for children of both sexes to be at least 90 per cent compared with 85 per cent in 2000 (General Assembly resolution S-21/2, annex, para. 34)
	Close gender gap in primary and secondary school education by 2005 (WSSD, FWCW, ICPD)
	Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieve gender equality by 2015 (WEF)
Increased literacy	Adult illiteracy reduced to half of its 1990 level (WSSD, EfA, FWCW, WSC, UNCED) by 2015 (WEF)
	Halve the illiteracy rate for women and girls by 2005 compared with the rate in 1990 (General Assembly resolution S-21/2, annex, para. 35 (c))
Other areas	
Improved access to safe drinking water	Universal access to safe drinking water; full coverage of drinking water supply (by 2015) (FWCW, WSSD, UNCED, Habitat, HfA) (CCA)
Improved access to safe sanitation	Universal sanitary waste disposal (WSSD, FWCW, UNCED) (CCA)

Area	*Conference goals*
Environment	Complete national strategy for sustainable development that reflects the contributions and responsibilities of all parties by 2002 (UNCED + 5)
Improved drug control	Measurable results in reducing illicit cultivation, manufacture, trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs by 2008 (UNGASS on drugs) (CCA) (targets also by 2003 in area of legislation, strategies and programmes)
Financing for development	
Official development assistance (ODA)	Allocate 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for overall ODA (WSSD, FWCW and other conferences) and 0.15 per cent of GNP for ODA for the least developed countries (Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, Habitat)
20/20 initiative	Agreeing on a mutual commitment between interested countries to allocate 20 percent of ODA and 20 per cent of the national budget to basic social programmes (WSSD)

Note: The following abbreviations are used:

CCA:	common country assessment
EfA:	World Conference on Education for All
FWCW:	Fourth World Conference on Women
Habitat:	United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)
HfA:	Declaration of Alma-Ata on health for all
ICPD:	International Conference on Population and Development
ICPD+5:	five-year review of the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development
UNCED:	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCED+5:	five-year review of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNGASS on drugs:	twentieth special session of the General Assembly on countering the world drug problem
WCHR:	World Conference on Human Rights
WCN:	World Conference on Nutrition
WEF:	World Education Forum
WFS:	World Food Summit
WSC:	World Summit for Children
WSSD:	World Summit for Social Development

United Nations E/2000/58

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
25 May 2000

Original: English

Substantive session of 2000
New York, 5 July-1 August 2000
Item 14 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Social and human rights questions: advancement of women

Report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on its twentieth session

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I. Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

1. At its twentieth session, the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) approved the feasibility study on the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS) as presented in document INSTRAW/BT/2000/R.3 and as amended in terms of the budget, phasing and implementation and recommended that the Institute grant priority to its implementation.

2. The Board decided that:

(a) INSTRAW should concentrate on the launching of GAINS and defer all thematic research projects except the two which were in their final stages of completion, namely, the Engendering the Political Agenda and the Temporary Labour Migration of Women;

(b) The Director should identify outputs for GAINS, on the basis of the phased budget presented to the Board;

(c) The Director of INSTRAW should also be given the flexibility to use some of the core funds for phase I of the GAINS project, without jeopardizing the functioning of the Institute. The Director is, however, urged to continue the fund-raising efforts to ensure the quick implementation of all phases of the project.

3. The Board requested the United Nations Controller, as resources become available, to release additional funds over the approved operational budget for the year 2000 to the Director, to enable her to start up the GAINS project.

4. The existing staff at INSTRAW should be trained in the use of information and communication technologies for the operation of GAINS.

5. The Board reiterated its appeal to the United Nations Secretariat to have the programme support costs waived for the past three years; and further requested that the said waiver be extended to the current year.

6. The Board sought to have a well-substantiated clarification on the conflicting financial information being provided by the Office of the Controller and the United Nations external auditors, regarding the measures taken to "correct the administrative anomalies noted in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit", as noted in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 54/140.

7. The Board requested an external audit of the INSTRAW Trust Fund for the period 1994-1999.

8. The Board also requested that quarterly certified financial statements on the INSTRAW Trust Fund be provided to the Director and the Board of Trustees of INSTRAW by the Office of the Controller.

9. The Board further requested regular audited accounts of the Trust Fund.

10. While greatly appreciating the support given to INSTRAW so far, the Board urged the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to intensify this collaboration by supporting the Director in all her fund-raising efforts and other activities to revitalize INSTRAW.

11. Given the great concern about the Institute's current financial crisis, the Board noted with great appreciation the first substantial cash contributions to GAINS and INSTRAW from the Government of Spain. The Board also noted with appreciation the payment of pledges received from Colombia, Cyprus, Mexico, Morocco and South Africa. The Board noted with special appreciation the continuing support and in-kind contributions of the host country, the Dominican Republic.

II. Pending matters and progress report on the activities of INSTRAW for 1999

12. At its first meeting, under agenda item 4, the Board reviewed the pending matter of the "Friends of INSTRAW" and the progress report on the activities of INSTRAW for 1999. The Board had before it documents INSTRAW/BT/2000/CRP.1 and INSTRAW/BT/2000/R.2/Rev.1.

13. The Director of INSTRAW introduced the agenda item by presenting document INSTRAW/BT/2000/CRP.1 on "Friends of INSTRAW". She gave a brief description of the "Friends of INSTRAW" concept, which was initially proposed during the nineteenth session of the Board of Trustees. She referred to the underlying idea behind this concept, which was to give visibility as well as

financial and political support to the Institute's work. She brought to the Board's attention the three models proposed in the document, namely: (a) eminent individuals who would act as "ambassadors of good will" for INSTRAW; (b) individuals who were formerly associated with INSTRAW and who would lobby for the Institute on an individual and informal basis; and (c) associations or councils at the national level. As an example of a national council working for the Institute, she referred to the National Council for Research on Women, the current focal point of INSTRAW in the United States of America, which has its own network of 84 research organizations in the United States. The Director of the Council has expressed interest in revitalizing its relationship as a council for INSTRAW, stating that a national council could assist the Institute in its fund-raising activities and that the relationship would also benefit their organization by giving them a global link to other research institutes worldwide. The Director also stated that it would be vital to obtain tax-exempt status for such national councils for the purposes of fund-raising.

14. One Board member agreed that it was important to reactivate such links with national councils. She stated that the second modality, focusing on individuals formerly associated with the Institute, would also be useful if those who had been and still were supportive of INSTRAW could be recruited. In that regard, she suggested that the Director should advise the Board of those individuals who she felt would be most relevant to approach.

15. Another Board member stated that the ideas on linkages under the "Friends of INSTRAW" proposal should be concretized. She added that focal points could give impulse to INSTRAW activities if they were kept properly informed of the Institute's work and that joint activities should be carried out to disseminate INSTRAW methodologies. The resulting impact at the national level would be important. She also noted the need for INSTRAW to maintain and disseminate up-to-date information through its web site.

16. Emphasizing the importance of raising the visibility of INSTRAW, one Board member mentioned that the Institute's work was not well known in the European region. She noted that, in many cases, European institutions were duplicating work already done by INSTRAW. She suggested that a network foundation for INSTRAW should be organized in Europe to promote gender issues, to represent the Institute in regional and international conferences and to make important contacts in the region. The Board member expressed her willingness to set up such a foundation and offered her assistance towards that end.

17. The Board members agreed that decisive decisions should be made during the course of the meeting in relation to the three models proposed. They recognized that the staff of INSTRAW would be facing additional work should they attempt to operationalize all three models. Therefore, they considered that the Board should prioritize the proposed models. It was generally considered that the establishment of national councils would be very important and that the Institute should continue its dialogue with the National Council for Research on Women. Individual Board members would discuss further with the Director their respective suggestions for establishing councils for the European region and the Arab countries as well as assisting the Institute to establish links with existing research institutions and networks.

18. In order to facilitate raising the profile of INSTRAW, the President of the Board suggested that Board members should keep the Institute informed of the various meetings they would be attending and new research data available at the national and regional levels. Likewise, she requested that the Institute keep the Board members informed of important meetings taking place in their countries or regions.

19. The Director then brought to the Board's attention the implementation of the programme of work for 1999 (INSTRAW/BT/2000/R.2/Rev.1). She highlighted the fact that, in recent years, INSTRAW had suffered a severe financial crisis and during the preceding year a lack of leadership for six months. The last few months of 1999 had been characterized by efforts to stop or reverse the crises and pull INSTRAW back on its course. During the biennium, stringent cost-reduction measures had been taken, such as the closing of the printing shop, reduction of staff, closing of the liaison office at United Nations Headquarters and re-phasing of the programme of work. She mentioned that, in May 1999, the Board of Trustees had developed a position paper which was presented to the Economic and Social Council, with a resulting resolution in which the Council recommended that INSTRAW should develop a new vision and that its work should be oriented towards the utilization of new information and communication technologies.

20. The Director emphasized that, during the period under discussion, many efforts had been made to regain the confidence of Member States and donor countries, particularly the European Union. Briefings had been given to other Governments and letters had been sent to Board members and focal points requesting them to lobby with their Governments.

21. The Director also informed the Board in detail about her efforts in fund-raising, which included holding several meetings with Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York and other international organizations.

22. In respect of the programme of work of INSTRAW, the Director reported that, despite the difficulties she had just outlined, the Institute had produced the following: three studies on engendering the political agenda, (Dominican Republic, Romania, South Africa), the results of which had been presented at an expert group meeting held in Romania on 2 and 3 September 1999; and two studies, in conjunction with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), on temporary labour migration of women (Bangladesh, Sri Lanka), the results of which had been presented at a joint INSTRAW/IOM expert group meeting held in Geneva on 30 and 31 August 1999. The case studies from both the Engendering the Political Agenda and Temporary Labour Migration programmes would be published with the kind assistance of the United Nations Publications Service and were projected to be launched at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in June 2000. An international non-governmental organization (NGO), "Global Action for Ageing", had, in March 2000, launched the INSTRAW book entitled *Ageing in a Gendered World: Women's Issues and Identities* in New York.

23. In the area of training, the Director reported that a training workshop on statistics and indicators on gender issues had been held in Mongolia in May 1999 in conjunction with the Ministry of External Relations of Mongolia.

24. In discussing the report, one Board member noted that she had seen and highly appreciated the results of the Engendering the Political Agenda project and recommended that the expert group meeting results should be sent to all international women's organizations. She also made reference to the project on Women Networking for Conflict Resolution and pointed out that a new Stability Pact for Women in the Balkan Area had been established in Europe, and that she would obtain details on that Pact and later inform INSTRAW. Another Board member inquired on the possibility of relating the studies carried out under that project to the situation of women in Kosovo and East Timor. Another Board member inquired why similar studies were not carried out in Africa, where women faced very similar conflict situations. The President answered both questions by explaining that funding restrictions made it necessary to limit the scope of projects, as evidenced in the strategic plan adopted at the Board's nineteenth session (INSTRAW/BT/1999/R.4), and that the conflict project was intended as a methodological model which could later be applied in other countries.

25. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General suggested that, before INSTRAW undertook further activities under the theme of conflict resolution, it should look at what the other United Nations agencies were doing in that area with the objective of establishing future collaboration. She further pointed out that the Board should bear in mind that the progress report dealt with the former method of work of the Institute. Under the new structure and working method, all research and training activities would have to be funded separately. Therefore, all proposed research and training projects would need to have their own separate funding.

26. The President of the Board noted that GAINS would be the key project for the Institute and that it would have to be made clear that funds donated for its implementation would need to be earmarked separately from those given for core activities. It was clarified that core activities represented all the activities associated with the running of the Institute, with the exception of the actual research and training activities, which were to be considered projects.

III. New structure and working method of INSTRAW

27. At its second and third meetings, the Board considered the new structure and working method of INSTRAW under agenda item 5. The Board had before it documents INSTRAW/BT/2000/R.3, INSTRAW/BT/2000/R.4, INSTRAW/BT/2000/R.4/Corr.1, INSTRAW/BT/2000/CRP.2 and INSTRAW/BT/2000/CRP.2/Add.1.

28. The Director presented documents INSTRAW/BT/2000/CRP.2 and INSTRAW/BT/2000/CRP.2/Add.1 on focal points. The Director noted that, given the new working method of INSTRAW based on GAINS, focal points would need to play a new and important role as outreach and feedback nodes at the national and regional levels. Taking into consideration that new role, INSTRAW focal points had been requested to confirm their desire to renew their status. Thirteen focal points responded, reiterating their interest in operating as focal points of INSTRAW under its new working framework.

29. The Director then proposed a new framework for the operations of the INSTRAW network of focal points which included not only new functions but new criteria and a new procedure for selection. In that regard, the Board was asked to consider approving the new approach, which proposed that focal points should be selected on the basis of their information and communications technologies (ICT) facilities and expertise, outreach/feedback capacity and gender focus. The new approach also proposed that, in addition to applications being channelled through Permanent Missions, they might also be submitted directly to the Institute. The Director noted that, in order to expedite the selection procedure, the Institute would periodically submit to the Bureau of the Board of Trustees screened applications for approval on behalf of the Board.

30. Following the presentation by the Director, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted that new terms of reference would need to be provided to focal points so that they were clear on their new functions and on what to expect from INSTRAW and GAINS. She also informed the Board that WomenAction 2000 had a large LISTSERVE of NGOs which could be of use to INSTRAW as it expanded its network of focal points. Several Board members also offered to provide INSTRAW with lists of regional and subregional networks to which INSTRAW could link.

31. The Director clarified the difference in the roles of the Friends of INSTRAW and the focal points. She explained that the Friends of INSTRAW would act mostly in areas of fund-raising, promotion and raising the visibility of INSTRAW, while focal points would operate as outreach nodes of the GAINS system. After receiving some additional clarifications, the Board approved the new framework for the operations of the INSTRAW network of focal points and confirmed the status of the 13 focal points that applied for renewal.

32. Turning the Board's attention to the feasibility study of GAINS, the Director emphasized the relevance of GAINS at a time when rapid globalization and technological change presented new opportunities, challenges and risks for women. One major problem, which GAINS would help to address, was the widening gender gap in terms of access and use of these new technologies.

33. The Director then gave a PowerPoint® presentation on GAINS in terms of its role, objectives, structure, planned activities, expected outputs and the general importance of the services. She informed the Board that, by providing a web-based global mechanism for knowledge generation, management and dissemination, GAINS would empower women and bring their views and concerns closer to decision-making processes. The Director continued by informing the Board that the main services of GAINS included: interactive databases, collaborative research consultation and dialogue facilities, training and capacity-building, news services and on-line publishing. In addition, GAINS would establish a global electronic platform of researchers and trainers that would play a key role in identifying new trends and challenges to women's advancement and gender equality and in the production of new knowledge which would feed back into the United Nations policy processes as well as into grass-roots action. Likewise, GAINS would work through a network of regional and national focal points that would function as outreach and feedback nodes. GAINS would not only contain a database on gender-related training resources but also facilities for distance learning and on-line multimedia courses to build capacity in the use of ICTs and in other areas. She further elaborated on the establishment of a Consultation Network of Key Stakeholders comprised of policy makers, practitioners, researchers, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations, the media and the private sector. This network would: (a) form task forces on specific critical issues for consultation and integration of research findings into policy recommendations and actions; (b) provide opportunities for interface between researchers and policy makers, NGOs and other stakeholders; and (c) actively promote research findings and recommendations to policy-making bodies through advocacy organizations. In conclusion, she reiterated

that GAINS, as a method of harnessing the transformative power of ICTs could easily stimulate a qualitative leap forward for women into the twenty-first century. Not only would GAINS provide a dedicated virtual workshop on research and training, it would facilitate women's entrance into the information society. GAINS would also support women to become global players and widen their involvement in decision-making at all levels. In that respect, GAINS would allow women to gain lost ground.

34. Board members concurred that GAINS was not only a useful tool for the international gender and development community, but also the means of revitalizing the Institute. In that regard, it was agreed that INSTRAW should give priority to GAINS and that the Director should present a time-frame for the implementation of GAINS indicating the various stages and corresponding costs and outputs.

35. Some Board members requested clarification as to whether GAINS was a special project or the new methodology of INSTRAW for research and training and whether GAINS would be financed and managed separately from the Institute's core budget. Many Board members expressed concern over that matter and requested that GAINS hence should be operationalized, at least during the transition period, using the available resource base of INSTRAW. Therefore, the Board recommended that, as the earmarked funds were provided to the Trust Fund, the need for flexibility should be taken into consideration by the contributing countries.

36. The launching of a prototype of GAINS at the forthcoming twenty-third special session of the General Assembly was recognized by the Board members as a good opportunity to present GAINS to Member States and other potential donors. The Director informed the Board that preparations for that presentation were under way through the initial elaboration of the web site. In that effort, INSTRAW was seeking collaborative support from other United Nations entities for the preparation of the database component of the site.

37. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as several Board members, highlighted the importance of illustrating how GAINS would serve the different stakeholders, in particular grass-roots women. The representative of the regional commissions noted that GAINS should not only establish networks of researchers but also networks to promote dialogue between NGOs and national machineries. He continued by adding that thematic networks should be established between countries with similar problems, as well as regional ones.

38. Several Board members inquired as to how GAINS would ensure the access of its services to stakeholders that did not have the technological requirements, particularly in developing countries. In that regard, the Director noted that INSTRAW was developing a network of focal points that would serve as outreach and feedback nodes. She suggested that the issue could be discussed more thoroughly when presenting the document INSTRAW/BT/2000/CRP.2 on focal points. She also noted that ICT centres such as those established by the United Nations Development Programme in numerous countries, could be used, and hence GAINS could work through already established systems.

39. In introducing the proposed operational budget for 2000, the Director noted that, during the 1999 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, many Member States had demonstrated their preference in effecting contributions through alternative modalities, for example, earmarked contributions for specific programme activities. She added that that new funding approach had presented difficulties for INSTRAW in the preparation of its operational budget for 2000, in view of the fact that the flow and level of contributions to be received could not be estimated and financial projections could not be made. She explained further that the proposed budget for 2000 took into account the funds currently available in the Trust Fund as of 31 December 1999, amounts pledged for the year 2000 and contributions which were still outstanding from previous bienniums. On the basis of those resources, the management prepared and submitted to the Controller an operational budget amounting to US$ 870,500. The Controller had agreed to that budget level, which could be adjusted as additional resources entered the Trust Fund.

40. The Director further noted that the budget under review complied with the recommendations of Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/54 of 29 July 1999, in which the Council requested that INSTRAW core staff should be constituted of a small number of persons. In doing so, the budget made provision for the minimal staffing configuration possible for the carrying out of core operations of the

Institute's new working method, which included the servicing and coordination of INSTRAW special projects. Likewise, and in view of its limited resources, only those financial provisions required for the basic functioning of the Institute had been budgeted.

41. Some Board members expressed concern with the continuous financial crisis that INSTRAW had been confronting for years and recalled that, during its nineteenth session, the Board had discussed the matter thoroughly and had made specific recommendations for addressing the issue. In that regard, they requested information regarding the follow-up actions of INSTRAW to those recommendations.

42. One Board member specifically referred to the recommendation made by the Board at its nineteenth session (see E/1999/57, para. 3) to request that the United Nations Secretariat waive the programme support cost charged to the INSTRAW Trust Fund for the period 1998-1999 and onward until such time as the Institute's financial base was fortified. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General explained that initial consultations had been carried out by the Executive Office of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, but that to date no official approval of the waiver had been issued. She further offered to follow up the matter.

43. Another Board member requested information as to whether the administrative anomalies noted by the evaluation conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit on INSTRAW (A/54/156-E/1999/102) had been corrected and if corresponding payments had reverted to the INSTRAW Trust Fund. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General indicated that, in December 1999, the Controller had informed INSTRAW that partial payments had been made and that the remaining amount would be paid once the external auditors had made available the outcome of their review on the matter. One Board member inquired whether INSTRAW management had accounting records indicating when the reimbursement had actually been made. The acting Administrative Officer replied that such accounting records were not available at INSTRAW headquarters but could be requested from the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts. The Director pointed out that the Management Letter from the United Nations Board of External Auditors to INSTRAW in December 1999 on the audit they had conducted on the Institute for the period 1 January 1998 to 30 June 1999 indicated that appropriate adjustments to the amount of US$ 326,595 should be effected to the INSTRAW Trust Fund. At the request of the Board, copies of those letters were made available. The Board recommended that, given the ambiguity of the information provided by the Office of the United Nations Controller and the Board of External Auditors, regular audited accounting of the Trust Fund should be provided to the Board. Furthermore, the Board decided to request that an external audit should be conducted on the Institute's Trust Fund for the period 1994 to 1999.

44. Following that discussion, the Board expressed concern with the Institute's lack of access to the financial statements and audited accounts of its Trust Fund. It requested that the Board and the Director should be provided with quarterly financial statements and regular audited accounts of the Trust Fund.

45. Another Board member noted that any outstanding payments owed to INSTRAW should be made available as a means of facilitating the initial implementation of GAINS. In that regard, she noted that payment of the outstanding amounts owed by the host country would be highly recommendable. The representative of the host country noted that, although some contributions remained outstanding, the host country made regular in-kind contributions through the provision of services (such as electricity and security) which represented a significant item for the operations of the INSTRAW headquarters. She went on to say that, given the country's currently limited resources, it would be very difficult for the Government to make a full payment.

46. The Director then presented the financial requirements for the initial implementation of GAINS. She provided, for the consideration of the Board, a phased tentative budget for year one, reflecting the budget provided in the feasibility study, to be implemented in two phases. The first phase, to be carried out from April to September 2000, would establish the basic design and architecture of GAINS and initiate the database. The second phase, to be implemented from October 2000 to March 2001, would consist of content development of the system. Pending availability of funds for 2001, that phase would continue in the new year focusing on the delivery of specific outputs. For phase one and two, the estimated cost was $565,000. The third phase would begin in April 2001, providing incorporation of additional functionality, production of collaborative research

outputs and interactive on-line training or distance learning. Those three phases would complete the cycle for year one.

47. For phase one and part of phase two (until the end of year 2000), the estimated cost would be approximately $400,000. That amount did not include the provision of a full complement of INSTRAW resources and services to GAINS. The Director of INSTRAW proposed and the Board approved that the Institute should make GAINS its only project for the transition period of year one. That would include the assignment of a full-time INSTRAW professional staff member to GAINS, the focus of the work of her office as well as the coverage of all overhead costs and support services that would be provided to GAINS. It should also be noted that the required amount of $400,000 for 2000 did not include various financial and in-kind contributions which were currently being negotiated and, in some instances, had already been committed, as for example the services of a technical expert from the United Nations Development Programme to assist in the building of the web site.

48. After thorough review of the feasibility study on GAINS, which had been carried out by an independent consulting firm, the Board welcomed the concept and components of GAINS. It was suggested and agreed that, as GAINS was implemented, there would be a need to organize seminars for focal points, particularly in the developing countries, to train them in the use and dissemination of GAINS to grass-roots women. That strategy would enable INSTRAW to reach technologically deprived women, and to identify their specific needs in terms of what GAINS could offer. The Board then approved the feasibility study on GAINS as presented in document INSTRAW/BT/2000/R.3, with amendments in terms of its budget, phasing and implementation. The Board also agreed that the Director should be given the flexibility to adjust the approved budget within the level of resources approved for 2000. It further decided that, given the need for INSTRAW to focus on GAINS, all special projects should be deferred until a later date.

IV. Other issues of relevance to the functioning of INSTRAW

49. At its fourth meeting, the Board considered, under agenda item 6, proposals for the establishment of councils or associations to promote INSTRAW and its work.

50. One Board member read out a proposal for the establishment of an association to be named the international council for INSTRAW with the following objectives: (a) to constitute an international network for the exchange and dissemination of gender-related information; (b) to give visibility to INSTRAW activities in the respective countries and regions of the members; (c) to promote the interests of INSTRAW by conducting parallel activities in the various regions; and (d) to contribute to the databases prepared by INSTRAW.

51. It was envisioned, she continued, that the council would be headquartered in a European country and be would associated with a most supportive former INSTRAW Board member. Such an arrangement would open new avenues of international cooperation for INSTRAW and would facilitate funding for INSTRAW projects. She pointed out that the association would, in a sense, be a "virtual" association as the members would network and coordinate their activities by e-mail. She added that the INSTRAW Director, two or three INSTRAW staff members and representatives of the Board could be invited to meetings of the association.

52. Another Board member suggested that perhaps the name INSTRAW should not appear in the title of the association since such an association would then not be eligible to receive funding from the European Union. She assured the Board members that such an association could promote INSTRAW and its activities and operate under a joint and shared budget with INSTRAW. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General pointed out that that arrangement could introduce difficulties in terms of allocation of funds and auditing. It was finally agreed that, in order to be eligible for funds from the European Union, the association would be called the European Council for the Advancement of Women and it would adopt the GAINS project, which it would implement together with INSTRAW. It was also agreed that similar associations could be set up in other regions to widen the support and funding for GAINS in the same way.

53. One Board member reiterated her personal commitment to the promotion of INSTRAW and requested from the Director a signed letter of recommendation and project proposals which she

would present at the next meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, of which her country was the current chair. She added that she would further promote INSTRAW in the European Union and assist in coordination at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in New York in June 2000. She mentioned that, as head of her country's delegation and Vice-President of the Francophone Women's Association, she would promote INSTRAW and GAINS in her official statements.

54. Another Board member suggested that a representative of INSTRAW should make a presentation on GAINS to the European Union and offered her assistance in securing the necessary funding from the European Union to cover travel expenses to Brussels.

55. Endorsing the idea of establishing regional associations to support INSTRAW, one Board member congratulated the Director and the staff on their efforts towards the creation of a worthwhile project of interest to women at all levels.

56. The representative of the host country announced that, although the Government of the Dominican Republic would not be able to provide a cash contribution to INSTRAW during the current year, the State Secretariat for Women had been able to secure a commitment for an in-kind contribution to the GAINS project of 10 computers and 1 server which would be provided to INSTRAW as soon as possible.

57. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General informed the Board that her Office had received a cheque from the Government of South Africa in the amount of US$ 15,780 as their annual contribution to INSTRAW. Similarly, the Institute had received confirmation of a first payment of US$ 58,760.96 of a total amount of US$ 147,887 pledged by the Government of Spain.

58. Turning the Board's attention to the upcoming twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General briefed the Board on the state of readiness of two documents prepared by the Preparatory Committee for the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, namely the Political Declaration and the outcome document on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.[1] She noted that it had been agreed that those NGOs which had not been present at the 1995 Conference in Beijing could be accredited to the twenty-third special session of the Assembly but that the deadline for applications was rapidly approaching. She suggested that those Board members wishing to register their organizations for accreditation should communicate with her Office by fax or e-mail as soon as possible. She recommended that Board members should urge their countries to send the highest level of representation in order to demonstrate the importance of women's issues. She further recommended that members should make their delegations and regional groups aware of the planned INSTRAW events at the twenty-third special session of the Assembly and perhaps suggest specific paragraphs to be added to the outcome document where INSTRAW, in addition to the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), constituting the three pillars for the advancement of women in the United Nations, could be specifically mentioned. Heads of delegation could also be encouraged to mention INSTRAW in their statements. INSTRAW could assist in such promotion efforts by preparing a brief document which Board members could circulate before and during the twenty-third special session of the Assembly.

59. The President of the Board thanked all the participants and expressed particular appreciation for the efforts of the Director to revitalize the Institute. She also thanked the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for her support and assistance and requested that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs support the Director in the performance of her functions, particularly those related to fund-raising. She thanked the Governments of the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Morocco, South Africa and Spain for the concrete contributions which they had made to INSTRAW.

60. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General thanked the President for the leadership she had provided to the meeting and stated that it was the first time, in her recollection, that a Board of Trustees had developed such a comprehensive and concrete follow-up plan of action during its session. She also thanked the host country and the Governments that had contributed to the Trust Fund. Finally, she commended the staff of INSTRAW highly for their hard work and dedication to the revitalization of the Institute.

61. The Director expressed her appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for her assistance to and support for the Institute.

V. Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration

62. The twentieth session of the Board of Trustees of INSTRAW was held at INSTRAW headquarters in Santo Domingo from 4 to 6 April 2000. The Board held five meetings.

63. The session was opened by the President of the Board, Ms. Amaryllis Torres. She welcomed all the Board members and especially the new members, Ms. Ana Maria Braga da Cruz, Ms. Hanan El-Malki and Ms. Jane N. Mulemwa, the ex officio members, and the distinguished observers representing Member States.

64. In her opening remarks, the President briefly remarked that the new structure and working method of INSTRAW was the topic of the session. She continued by reminding the Board members that it is up to them to approve GAINS as a new modality of work for INSTRAW.

65. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, in her opening remarks, welcomed participants and conveyed the wishes of the Secretary-General for a successful Board meeting. She expressed appreciation to the Director and the staff of INSTRAW for all the work accomplished during the preceding months, to the host country for its consistent and unreserved political support to the Institute's revitalization process and the informal commitments of the Dominican private sector to the implementation of the GAINS project. She also gave recognition to the support given to INSTRAW by Mr. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; Ms. Lynne Gallagher and Ms. Noreene Janus and colleagues for the GAINS feasibility study and to the contributions of Mr. Jean-Pierre Halbwachs, Controller, and Mr. Gian Piero Roz, Director of the Information Technology Services Division, Office of Central Support Services, and their teams, who also reviewed the GAINS proposal.

66. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General further commented on the GAINS project, which had been born out of close cooperation between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and INSTRAW. The GAINS project was considered feasible and of modest cost and had the support of an appropriate infrastructure provided by the host country. She further expressed hope that the Institute would continue with its revitalization process and that, with the support of donor countries and an appropriate fund-raising strategy, INSTRAW would obtain tangible results. She also expressed confidence in the GAINS project.

67. Referring to the financial situation of the Institute, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General expressed her expectation that the Board at its current session would make substantial progress in planning a strategy to recover outstanding pledges. She also pointed to the need to raise funds for developing a prototype of the GAINS system in order to show the delegations at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly what the GAINS system was capable of doing for women in developing countries.

68. In conclusion, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General pledged the best efforts of her Office, the members of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality and the Division for the Advancement of Women to assist INSTRAW with the launching of the prototype and other necessary support. She expressed confidence that the international community would find the GAINS project worthy and therefore would support the efforts of the Board and the Director to maintain and further enhance the momentum gained in the revitalization process.

69. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Eduardo Latorre, welcomed the participants to the Board session and made special reference to the most important issue to be discussed at the meeting, the revitalization process of INSTRAW. He expressed the confidence of the host country in the Institute's work and in the new working structure that the Institute proposed to implement and expressed the hope that, with the GAINS project, the Institute would continue to promote gender issues, particularly at the level of new information technologies. He further made reference to the Cybernetics Park that the host country expected to inaugurate in August 2000 which would use the most advanced technology to support global telecommunications. Therefore, he informed the participants that both the Government and the private sector were investing in the infrastructure in order to

ensure that it was the most advanced possible. Concluding, he remarked that the synergy between that infrastructure and the new focus of INSTRAW was evident.

70. The Director of INSTRAW, Ms. Eleni Stamiris, welcomed all participants to headquarters of INSTRAW and to the twentieth session of the Board of Trustees, during which new developments concerning the future of INSTRAW were going to be discussed. She continued by enumerating the difficulties encountered by INSTRAW during the preceding year and the efforts made to save the Institute from closing. She further referred to the GAINS project, which should prove effective in disseminating gender issues through state-of-the-art electronic means. She expressed thanks to those who had encouraged and given support to INSTRAW, particularly to Ms. Angela King, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women; Mr. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the host country; Ms. Julia Tavares de Alvarez, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations, the Government of Spain for their financial commitment to the GAINS project; and to the INSTRAW staff that had worked tirelessly to keep the Institute alive.

B. Attendance

71. The following members of the Board attended the session: Esther Ashton (Bolivia), Zakia Bouaziz (Tunisia), Ana Maria Braga da Cruz (Portugal), Hanan El-Malki (Syrian Arab Republic), Jane N. Mulemwa (Uganda), Norica Nicolai (Romania), Mamosebi Theresia Pholo (Lesotho) and Amaryllis Torres (Philippines).

72. The following ex officio members of the Board also attended: the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Angela King, Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women; the representative of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Mr. Patrice Robineau, representing all the regional commissions; Ms. Gladys Gutierrez, the representative of the Dominican Republic, the host country; and the Director of INSTRAW.

73. Also attending the session were the representatives of the Santo Domingo office of the United Nations Children's Fund, the European Union, the Embassy of Spain in the Dominican Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic.

C. Election of officers

74. At its first meeting, in accordance with rule 7 of its rules of procedure, the Board elected the following officers by acclamation:

President:
Amaryllis Torres (Philippines)

Vice-President:
Esther Ashton (Bolivia)

Rapporteur:
Jane Mulemwa (Uganda)

75. The re-elected president thanked the members of the Board for her re-election and for the renewed confidence in her that the Board had shown. She noted that it was now more essential than ever for the Board to be closely involved with and supportive of the Institute in order to secure the functioning of GAINS. She reiterated that it was important to demonstrate at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly that INSTRAW had the ability to fulfil its mandate and meet the challenges that lay ahead.

D. Agenda

76. At its first meeting, the Board adopted its provisional agenda (INSTRAW/BT/2000/R.1/Rev.1) by consensus. The agenda read as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Election of officers.
4. Matters pending and progress report on the activities of INSTRAW for 1999.
5. New structure and working method of INSTRAW.
6. Other issues of relevance to the functioning of INSTRAW.
7. Adoption of the report.
8. Date and venue of next session.

9. Closure of the twentieth session of the Board of Trustees.

77. In regard to the organization of work, the President made various proposals related to the distribution of documents and indicated that interventions by Board members and other participants should be as concise as possible.

E. Adoption of the report of the Board on its twentieth session

78. At its fifth meeting, on 6 April 2000, the Board adopted the report on its twentieth session (INSTRAW/BT/2000/R.5 and Add.1-3), together with a working paper on matters to be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

79. Prior to the closure of the twentieth session, the Board decided to target a date towards the last week of March or the first week of April 2001 for the holding of its twenty-first session.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Special Session, Supplement No. 2* (A/S-23/2).